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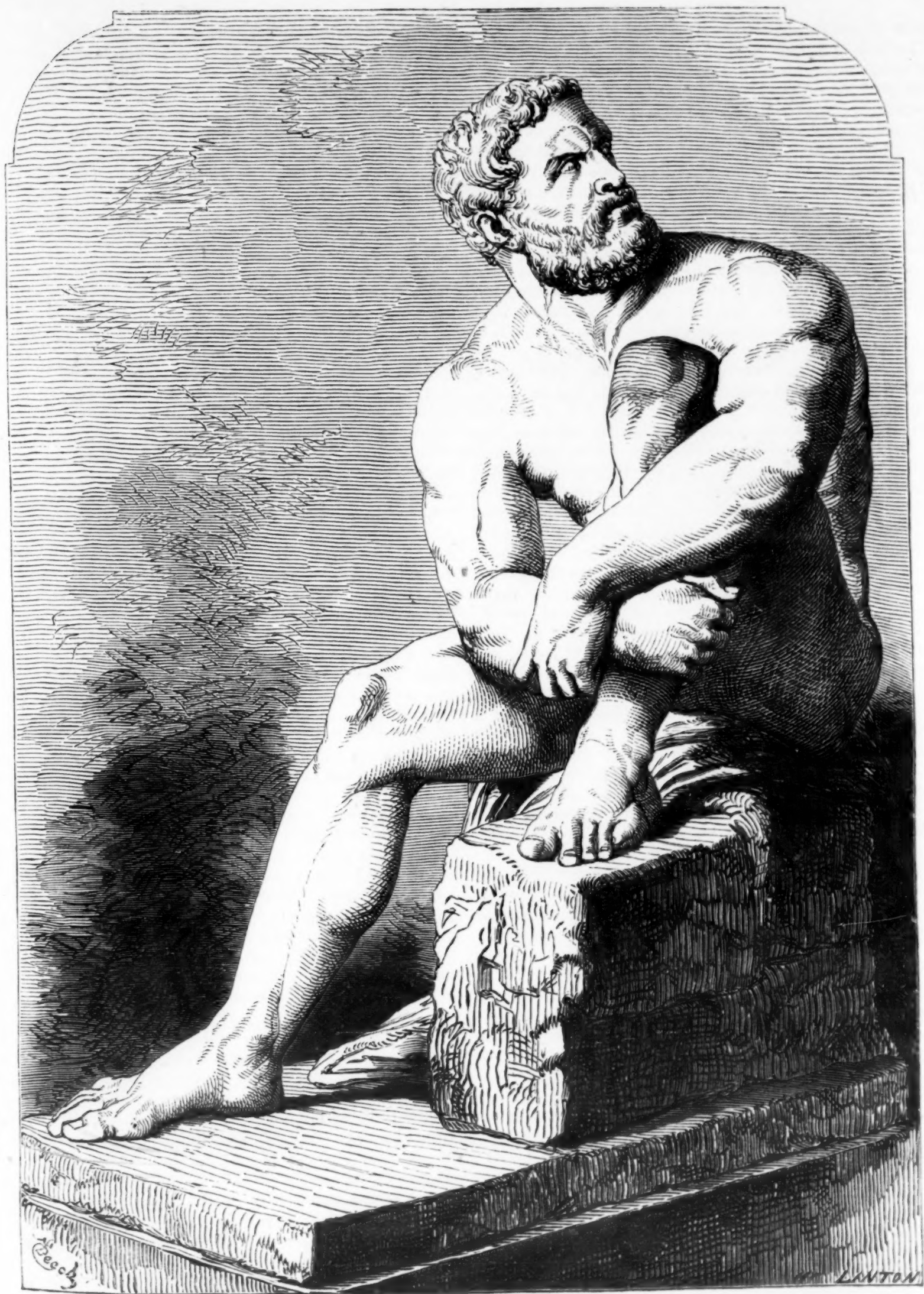
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SPECIMENS OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL: NO. VI.

BY E. H. DAILY, R.A.

MARIUS, AMONG THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

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MARIUS, AMONG THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

By E. H. BAILY, R.A.

"TELL the Senate, that you found Caius Marius sitting among the ruins of Carthage!" Such is the text which has suggested to Mr. Baily the fine work whose outlines form the subject of our engraving to-day. The mere choice of such a theme, to find expression through the medium of a single sculptured figure,—including, as its terms seem almost necessarily to do, many of the conditions of picture,—is itself an evidence of the genius which alone could execute it. The power to will in such exceptional cases includes the power to perform. The master-handling and consummate execution have, from these seemingly inadequate materials, brought out all the thought; and the story of Marius in his desolation is here told, as it were, in one grand epic phrase.

There is one respect in which this work of Mr. Baily's recommends itself particularly to our selection as an example of his art,—in the fact of its being a male figure, and of the heroic type. Steeped in the dreamier portion of Greek poetry, the mind of this sculptor has, as a habit, wrought preferentially on female models; and the mental tendency in that direction is sometimes visible in even the particular type of male beauty which he selects. Among the long series of poetical creations of various kinds that he has contributed to the native school of which he is the chief living ornament, he is therefore more familiarly known by his works in the classes referred to than by a performance like the present,—while nowhere, perhaps, has he delivered a more direct and emphatic utterance of his power than in this. We thus provide for our readers here at once an expression of his genius and of its variety.

There are no statues in the world beside which this figure might not stand. The action is studied, yet without affectation; and the modelling presents one of those felicitous instances of complicated arrangement by which great variety is obtained out of the lines of a single figure, and which are not unfrequent with this sculptor. In the case before us, the effect is that of a bold handling to match the bold thought. We know not why we should speak of this production as having a Grecian character, save for its kindred excellence and its conformity with the Greek canons. The sculptor is here throughout forgotten in his work:—to be which, is to be immortal in art. Form and action and attitude, accident and attribute and sentiment, are idealised into one assenting whole, which utters well the moral of the fallen Dictator. The work is dramatic, because the incident is dramatic. As we have said, the treatment is heroic, as the attitudinal character of the theme demanded; and it is a condition of this treatment, that the figure is entirely nude. But it is a curious evidence of the manner in which genius can deal with a poetic license like this, that at first sight it is scarcely noticed that the forms are naked; and when that fact *does* present itself, it is felt that all the time it has been yielding its unconscious contribution to the sentiment of abdicated greatness and ruined fortunes. The physical nakedness symbolises, as it were, the political destitution. The moral of the situation and of the condition speaks powerfully from this work. There is even, as it were, a sense of the desert about it.—All these things are the evidences of that fine thought in the treatment of sculpture subjects which alone can unlock their inner meanings and evolve their spiritualities. The hand that works thus, is working, we repeat, for immortality.

Another reason why we have selected this particular performance of Mr. Baily's as our specimen of his art, is, because it remains uncommissioned in his studio; and we thus introduce our readers to a work with which they have not had such obvious opportunities of making acquaintance as have been afforded them in reference to so many another masterpiece from the same hand. There are few things finer than this in the English school; and it cannot, we imagine, be long ere it will find its way into marble.

PICTURESQUE SINS.

By WESTLAND MARSTON.

EVERY moralist can show us that vice is universally wrong. I wish some one would arise to show that it is universally ugly. As the world goes, there are many sins—admitted to be sins by their perpetrators—which, so far from being concealed, are worn with a certain ostentation. The reason is, that they are supposed to be picturesque. As some noble houses have been content to hint their royal descent by the blazon of a bar sinister, there are men who will parade their pet sins, from a notion that they are related, however illegitimately, to the more striking and heroic virtues.

There is Harry Carter, for instance, called "Prince Hal" by his boon companions. His house is open to them; they empty his cellar, and hack out his hunters. He has so much conscience left, that he has not yet plunged beyond his depth in extravagance. He can still touch the bottom of solvency on tip-toe; but his fine estates are heavily mortgaged; his old English home, neglected and stripped of its trees, looks at him with mingled warning and reproach. Even the avenue is half cut down, and might tell Hal, whenever he rides up to the house, that he is, in a double sense, on the road to ruin. Worst of all, I am not sure that Hal even enjoys the life for which he pays so dearly. The wine in which he dissolves his pearl has not always the merit of being palatable; and there are certain soda-water moments besides, in which he has twinges of downright remorse. Still, on the whole, he believes himself to be a liberal, spirited fellow—a little reckless, he grants you, but nevertheless a thorough English blood. In other words, he lives in an attitude. He is sure that if you took his moral portrait as he stands, the whole effect—spite of some irregularity in the features—would be picturesque. Could any one prove to him that to trifle with the trust of wealth, to leave labour unencouraged, diligence unrewarded, ignorance uninstructed, was not only immoral, but ugly, I should still have hopes that Harry Carter might be reclaimed.

Our young squire, although he affects indifference to women, is complacently aware of the favour which they bear to him. It is when Lady Nancy, Miss Ditchley, and other Amazons, are in the field that he takes his most astonishing leaps. After the run, he wheels round to the ladies with a confident laugh, not quite free from effrontery. He is jovial, patronising, even careless. Yet if, in the midst of his loud mirth, the slight figure of Grace Noel on her pony should meet him in the lane, a grave deference would come suddenly over him, and he would uncover to her as to a queen.

Grace has not yet seen five-and-twenty summers. She lives in a little ivy-hid cottage, in a lane that skirts Mr. Carter's estate. Two years since, an annuity of two hundred pounds—the produce of a great aunt's legacy—made the young lady independent. An ancient spinster—once housekeeper of the aunt aforesaid—now resides with Grace, rather as a friend than as a dependent. Kindness to the humble is one of Miss Noel's characteristics. You will often find her on a sunny afternoon at the village-school. She will personally examine the little Browns, Parkers, and Smiths, as to their spelling and their samplers; or question them on home affairs, and the interests of their parents. She will cheer up Dame Gossett herself,—the victim of a malady which (without due regard to her position as an instructor) she is teaching the new generation to pronounce "rheumatiz." Does Grace enter the small shop of the village linen-draper, she never by any chance reminds him of the scantiness or old-fashionedness of his stock; but pays with a smile as bright as if she had never seen Regent Street. In general, she consents to encase her dainty feet in boots of country manufacture, and undergoes a martyrdom, compared with which that of the pedestrian who walked on unboiled peas was a trifle, rather than wound the village



Crispin by discarding his clumsy goods for those of the capital.

No wonder that Grace is in high favour with the poor. They all feel the charm of her simple and kindly manner, and vote her unanimously a "born and bred lady."

Grace has, however, less attractive aspects for some people. When a governess in the family of Mr. Tibbetts, the retired oilman, she was duly taught to "know her place" by Mrs. Tibbetts. To dine with the children—to refrain from intruding into the drawing-room, or from mingling with the wealthy guests—often to take her seat in the "rumble," and to bear the rough practical jokes of the elder Master Tibbetts—were a few of the trials to which the poor governess submitted in proud silence; and she a Noel, who could trace her descent to one of the oldest baronial houses in England, and who had a titular interest—though by no means a territorial one—in the romantic ruin of Noel Priory!

Grace did not forget this. Pride of family, and contempt of the merely wealthy, grew together in her breast, both feelings being nurtured by the hardships of her early days. She never forgot that she was born a lady, and did not perceive that her over-consciousness of the fact was gradually sapping its chief moral charm.

For nothing has Miss Noel been more applauded than for her felicity in repelling vulgar ostentation. Some decisive dowager, who wears her jewels as profusely, though less quietly, than the waxwork ladies at Madame Tussaud's; some red-cheeked plethoric little man, who made a lucky hit during the railway mania, and who utters truisms in an authoritative croak; some hopeful heir of the aforesaid speculator, who makes up a "book" for the Derby, and backs, in one sense of that word, horses which he could hardly venture to back in another,—one and all of these have at various times assailed Miss Noel with their condescension, and retreated from her with amusing precipitancy. Never rude, seldom sarcastic, there is a sort of rebuke in her low clear voice, in her smile full of civil attention but stopping short of interest, and, above all, in her look of perplexed interrogatory when patronage is specially intended, that delights the initiated. They can never admire enough the ease with which she puts down pompous old C—, or arrests the assurance of dictatorial Mrs. F—. She is so self-possessed—so much the lady; her pride, in a word, is so picturesque! Would that Grace could see such pride in its nakedness—a sin, and an ugly one.

For think, Grace, where it is leading you! Already it has taught you gross injustice to a large section of your fellow-creatures, taught you to confound a whole class with its worst examples, and to overlook the refinement and generosity which so often distinguish the architects of their own fortune; and, worse than this, taught you to attach undue value to manner and bearing, and to rate as nothing the warm and honest feelings, which may consist, not only with defects of breeding, but even with vulgar foibles.

Are you yourself, Grace, so certainly free from that very vulgarity which you despise in others? Would it not be a fair definition of vulgarity in its essence, to say that it is the sense of self predominating over the sense of one's relations to others? A woman of your taste, of course, would never make herself a locomotive advertisement of her jeweller and her milliner,—never use her tongue as if it were a weapon, and bayonet society with dogmas; but, in the perpetual sense of what is becoming to *you*,—of what befits the lady that you are,—in the suppressed but complacent contrast of yourself with others, is there nothing, Grace, of the same self-consciousness that lies at the root of all vulgarity? Even your suavity to the humble, which had once its source in spontaneous kindness, is already vitiated by this consciousness. There is more self than charity in your courtesies to the poor, when rendered chiefly because a lady is never arrogant to her inferiors. What will time make of you, with all your delicate tact, if you go on referring conduct, not to duties and sympathies, but to what

sets off and indicates your position? You will be a polished vulgarian, but a vulgarian no less because self-wrapped and heartless. And will not the narrow, though refined nature, that turns ever on itself as a pivot work at last the traces of its petty circuit into your face, until one sees there within how mean a round a soul can prison itself? Compared with a Christian woman, who hopes the best of all, who can see worth beneath a coarse exterior, who aims to make even the worst better, whose free kindness flows out of her like the perfume of a flower or the song of a bird,—compared with such a character, Grace, your own is not merely unamiable; it is ugly.

There is another sort of picturesque sinner, not unknown in our day. We lately met an example of this class, in the person of Mr. Leigh Challoner. Challoner is an amateur artist, poet, and musician; and his capacity in all these directions is current in a very select circle. It is mysteriously hinted that Challoner is a great genius, but that he scorns general opinion too much to write, paint, or compose for the public. He scarcely deigns to abuse it, except by implication. If a genial humorist sends a laugh rippling over the face of society, if a poet rivets its attention by some simple earnest strain, Challoner smiles, observes that A. or B. was the very man to succeed—there was no dangerous depth or subtlety in either; and tells you that the painter understood the public to a nicety who wrote "this is a horse" under his picture of the quadruped. Challoner receives we know not what admiration on the strength of being superior to his kind, and especially because he never helps it to his level. This quiet supremacy and disdain are again supposed by some to be eminently picturesque. O, Challoner, under any interpretation of your mind, it seems to us an ugly one! If you have not the genius to which you pretend, you are simply an impostor. If, possessing it, you purposely shun the homeliest phrase or form that may touch the heart of your brother with beauty or enlighten it with truth, you are a misanthrope: you may choose between the hypocrite and the scorner. Good men will raise statues to neither.

Many are the personages once held to be picturesque who are now seen to be mere scarecrows: powdered gentlemen of fashion, who founded their own reputations on those they had ruined; who could first insult the wife, and then "pink" the resentful husband; highwaymen, who rode to Tyburn-tree decorated with the favours of the fair; duellists, who were knaves in disguise, and compelled men to stake lives that had the sterling ring of manhood against their own brazen counterfeits; fools, who affected Byron's faults, without a touch of his genius, and disdained the world that they neither comprehended nor improved. Touching these, the delusions of society have long ago ceased, and they are now either abhorred or despised. Their successors will share the same fate. May we not learn from experience that whatever runs counter to moral worth is ugly, and that in reality there is no such thing as a picturesque sin?

THE ROMAIC BALLADS.—No. I.

By PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

THE Greek language, as it now exists, is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of the human mind. Jews and gipsies are well known as capital specimens of the obstinate persistency of nationality in races, and of the resistance which they offer to the accumulation of the methods of fusion which are constantly acting on a dispersed people shaken loose from a firm footing in any particular locality. But the continuity of national existence in the case of the Greeks presents phenomena to which neither Jews nor gipsies afford a parallel. The gipsies no doubt carry about with them a peculiar spoken language brought from the east, but it is a language of no historical significance or literary culture; while the Jews do indeed teach their children to mumble prayers and texts of Scripture

in their original national speech; but it is a process of indoctrination altogether forced and artificial, and as far remote from the daily life and habits of any modern Hebrew sojourning in Germany or Poland, as the Horatian stanzas and Greek iambs manufactured by boys in a classical English school are from the quotidian instincts and habits of the great British beefeater. But the Greeks, with an unbroken continuity of the strongest national feeling, possess also a spoken and written language, which is in all substantial elements identical with the dialect hummed by the musical young Homer on the banks of the Melas at Smyrna nearly three thousand years ago, and rolled out with the awful weight of moral dignity and political sagacity over the fine-eared crowds of the Athenian forum by that famous Pericles, who, like a terrestrial Jove, "lightened and thundered, and confounded Greece," more than four hundred years before the Christian era. The Greek language is, in fact, the only European dialect that by its continued existence bridges over the mighty gulf between the classical and the modern times. Latin has been transmuted into Spanish, Italian, French, and those wild uncultivated offshoots of the stout old Roman speech that still survive on the banks of the lower Danube, and in the country of the Grisons; but the long life of the Byzantine empire, protracted with so many painful struggles and morbid convulsions during the whole period of the middle ages, saved the language of Plato and Chrysostom from having its rare elements thrown into a crucible, for the purpose of forming a new product. Greek, even in that worst stage of corruption which it exhibits in the metrical romance called *Erotocritus*,* is in no sense a new building made of old materials; but rather an old building somewhat weather-beaten, with the polychromatic decorations in some places washed off, and with lichens here and there eating into the solid stone, and defacing the beauty of the sculptured forms in the frieze: recognisable, however, plainly as the very sacred temple in which anciently a blue-eyed Minerva, or a dark-locked Jupiter Olympius, possessed their terrestrial tabernacles. The whole solid framework and substantial materials of the building are entire, ready to shine out in almost pristine brightness, when the brush of a loving renovator and the touch of a skilful restorer shall be applied.

Those who wish to see in what a state of perfection the language of Homer and Pericles now exists, after the most recent refurbishments, applied with such skill and zeal since the example was shown by the illustrious Corais at the commencement of the present century, can be referred to no better or more obvious source of information than the *History of the Greek Revolution* by Tricoupi, of which three volumes have already been published in this country; but in this, and a few subsequent papers, it is our intention to leave out of view altogether the Greek of living polite writers, and say a few words on the songs and ballads of the unlettered peasantry, which form such a valuable department of the essentially national and popular poetry of modern Europe. When the Turks took Constantinople in 1543, they found a corrupt people no doubt in the metropolis, and a government in every respect worthy of the enslavement to which it was subjected; but it is seldom that a people is so worthless as the government which represents it; and a nation is never truly conquered so long as the peasantry, and the better portion of the lower and middle classes, cherish the national traditions, use the national language, and glory in the national faith. So it was with the Greeks. Nothing but absolute butchery or systematic expatriation could have caused the Greeks to cease from the land which was hallowed to them by every thought and every feeling by which man lives, when he is a single inch removed above the brutes that perish. Turkey could never conquer Greece morally or intellectually, fallen as this country undoubtedly was from that high position which

enabled its wise men to come forward as the schoolmasters of pretors and pontiffs in that all-embracing Rome to which they were made subject. The soul of Greek independence lived on for four centuries under the trampling hoofs of Mahometan despotism; and the spirit that once inspired the lofty odes of Pindar, and the choral-hymns of Æschylus, still made itself heard in the chanted liturgies of unlettered but faithful priests, and in the rude songs of high-hearted freebooters, who maintained the independence of their native hills by disowning the yoke of a law which could only be received on condition of national slavery and degradation.

The popular poetry of every people,—that is, the poetry which gives expression to the thoughts and feelings of the many in language intelligible to the many, without the aid of a special artistic culture,—will, in its characteristic outlines, as well as in its lights and shadows and whole tone, be a faithful reflection of the public and social condition of the people to whom it belongs; and herein lies its great value. As pieces of art many of the Romaic ballads are utterly worthless: were such things written now by any poet of the day, no person would take them for worth more than the paper on which they are written; but as "voices of the people,"—to use a phrase made popular by Herder,—as mere breathings, if you will, of popular feeling, and occasional jets of popular fancy, they are invaluable. In the simplest and least cumbrous form they give us the very soul and atmosphere of the popular life. In this view, the exploits and fortunes of their famous robber-chiefs, to which many of their ballads refer, possess no vulgar interest. A few of these we shall now translate in the measure of the originals; which is, the common long iambic verse of fifteen syllables, with a regular cesura after the fourth foot, following the accentuation of the spoken language, as distinguished from the quantities of scientific musical training,* and without the modern accompaniment of rhyme. In "The Death of Diacos," the brigand appears in his noblest character, dying the death of a Leonidas, indeed, almost at the very gates of Thermopylæ; for the event described in this ballad took place on the banks of the river Spercheus, at the outbreak of the Greek revolution in the month of April 1821.

THE DEATH OF DIACOS.

A CLOUD is blackening o'er the plain, a cloud as black as ravens!
Comes here Kalivas with his band, comes here Leventoiannes?
'Tis not Kalivas with his band, 'tis not Leventoiannes;
But 'tis Omair Bríones comes, and with him eighteen thousand.
This news when Diacos heard, I trow his soul was fierce within him;
His voice he lifted high, and spoke to the chief of his Palicari:
"Come, gather all my host, and call my valiant Palicari;
Deal powder freely to the men, and give them lead by handfuls!
Come quickly, quietly! then with me march on to Alamanna,
Where ramparts strong and trenches are; and there we will encamp us."
They took their bright blades in their hands, their heavy guns they shouldered;
To Alamanna's camp they came, and stood within the trenches.
"Look cheerly up, my sons," he cried, "look up and never fear them;
Stand to your post like Greeks, and fight like valiant old Hellenes!"
But fear came o'er them, and they fled dispersed all through the forest
But Diacos stood, and faced the fire with eighteen Palicari.
Three hours he stood, and fought with them, these eighteen Palicari;
Fought till his weary rifle burst, and fell in pieces near him;
Then drew his sword and bravely rushed there where the thickest fire was hailing,
And cut down Turks in countless lines, and seven Booluk-Pashas,
Till sprang in twain his trusty blade close to the hilt; and Diacos
Fell on the ground, and came alive into the hands of foemen.

* Written in the sixteenth century by Vincenzo Cornaro, a Cretan of Venetian extraction.—See Brande's *Mittheilungen über Griechenland*, Leipzig, 1842, vol. iii.

* Nothing can be more perverse than the modern practice of the Oxonians in pronouncing Greek prose according to artificial laws founded on musical quantities; whereas, the mere fact of the modern Greeks having preserved the accent, while they have lost the quantity of the ancient words, proves that the former was a much more essential, and therefore more persistent, element of classical speech than the latter.

And on the road Bríones thus with private word bespoke him :
 "Diácos, a Turk wilt thou become, and change the faith thou holdest,
 Wilt worship in the mosque with me, and leave the church of Christians?"
 Then answered he, and thus in wrath bespoke Omaír Bríones :
 "Away with you and with your faith, ye dogs, to black perdition!
 Greek was I born, and when I die, you'll find a Greek in Diácos!
 But if a thousand golden coins with Mahmud's stamp upon them
 Will sate your greed, for six days wait, till comes the brave Ulysses
 With Athanasius Vaías here, and they shall pay my ransom."
 These words when Chalibey did hear, he wept, and cried with anger,
 "A thousand purses I will give, a thousand and five hundred,
 To him that strikes stout Diácos down, that robber bold and lawless,
 Who wastes the Turkish land with war, and saps our wide dominion!"
 He spoke, and straight stout Diácos seized, and on the stake impaled him,
 And placed him upright in the midst. But Diácos laughed and scorned them,
 Flouted their faith, and taunting called them dogs and unbelievers.
 "When I upon the stake shall die, 'tis but one Greek that's perished!
 Ulysses lives; and prospers well our captain, brave Nicetas.
 They still shall waste your lands with war, and sap your wide dominion."

It is interesting to compare with this record of popular tradition the account of the last hours of this modern Leonidas given by the polished historian Tricoupi, in the fourteenth chapter of his first volume. We translate only the concluding part of the narrative.

"After the battle, the pashas took the road that leads to Zetouni, taking with them Diacos and his foster-son,* who had been taken captive with him, and commanded the stout old chief to walk before them to grace their triumphal procession. But fearing lest he might run off and escape on the way, they soon afterwards set him on a mule, and bound him with chains. The night after they arrived at Zetouni, they caused him to be brought before them in presence of Chali Bey, and began to interrogate him about the insurrection. Diacos replied at once, without fear, that the whole Greek nation was sworn either to be exterminated or to achieve its liberty. Whereupon Mahomet Pasha, admiring the boldness of the man, said that he was willing to deliver him from his present evil case, if he would serve him faithfully. To which Diacos replied, 'I will not serve you.' 'Make your choice,' said the pasha; 'serve me, or I will kill you.'† 'Hellas,' replied the captive, 'has many a Diacos.' On the following day, the 24th April, the order went forth that he should be impaled. The man who communicated to him the harsh ordinance, put into his hands at the same time the painful instrument by which he was to die, and told him to carry it and follow him. But Diacos threw the stake on the ground, and turning to the Albanians who surrounded him, exclaimed, 'Is there no one here who will kill me? why do you allow these Orientals (οἱ Ἀνατολίταις) to torture me? I am not a malefactor.' When on his way to the place of execution, he stood, and casting his eyes on the ground, which was smiling with all the green freshness of the spring season, he repeated the couplet—

Γιὰ ἰδί καίρῳ τοῦ διαλίξιν ὁ Χάρης νὰ μὲ πάρῃ
 Τάχα π' ἀνθίζουν τὰ κλαδιά καὶ ὅραν' ὁ γῆ χορτάρι.‡

Arrived at his final destination, he bore manfully the most painful of deaths, being in torture for three hours."

In the following ballad, representing a dialogue between Olympus and Kissabos, the natural opposition between the mountain country as the home of liberty, and the plains as the abode of slaves, is well brought out. In the translation we shall depart here from the strictness of the original rhythm, and adopt our common rhymed ballad verse of fourteen syllables.

* The modern Greek word for this is *ψυχώτης*, literally *son of my soul*—a fine idea.

† Here the original presents another example of a frequent new application of a classical word, *ἐξορώσῃ*, literally *I will darken you*—quite Homeric.

‡ We have retained the original of these lines that any of our readers may have an opportunity of judging in what way the vulgarest Greek of the uneducated modern peasantry differs from the classic old dialect of Homer and Plato. The translation is,

"Behold the time when Charon grim to take my life hath chosen,
 Even now when green is every branch, and grows each blade the greenest."

OLYMPUS AND KISSABOS.

OLYMPUS high and Kissabos once hotly strove together,
 Of storms they talked and blustering days, of snow and rainy weather.

White snow from high Olympus came, dark rain from Kissabos,
 Then Kissabos turns round and speaks to high Olympus thus;
 "Strive not with me, Olympus high, thou lawless robbers' nest,
 With Kissabos among the hills of Thessaly king confessed,
 Whose lofty grandeur from the plain Larissa's agas know."
 Olympus then to Kissabos turns round and speaketh so:
 "Ha, Kissabos, inglorious hill, foul misbeliever's nest!
 By cruel agas ruled at will, by Turkish foot oppressed;
 The old Olympus high am I by all the world confessed.
 Fifty cloisters I can count, my peaks are sixty-two;
 On every ridge a church, a well 'neath every peak I view.
 On me the robbers dwell secure through all the wintry snow,
 And when the spring with green is bright a-roving forth they go.
 Free robbers in the mountains dwell; slaves litter in the plains;
 On me with kingly flapping wings the golden eagle reigns,
 And sits upon a mist-crowned crag, and to the sun doth say:
 O sun, thy morning beam is faint, but strong thy noontide ray,
 My claws thou makest warm and strong, that I may find my food,
 Where lurks the partridge in the field, the pigeon in the wood!"

This little piece is of more value than many pages of high-toned historical rhetoric, to show by what habits of thought and association it was that the Greek *klepht*, or free-booter, became clothed to the popular imagination of his countrymen with many of the finest poetical qualities of the hero and the patriot. William of Deloraine, Watt of Harden, and the other moss-troopers of Sir Walter Scott's lay, were robbers unquestionably in many of their habits of life, if judged by the strict law of our peaceful and proper times; but they were stanch Scotchmen also, and patriots, better than many who now breathe. In the same way it is unquestionable that the mountain-caves of Olympus, Pindus, and Parnassus, which sheltered the freebooting clan under Turkish despotism, were the nurseries of Greek nationality, and the training schools of Greek independence.

In our next Paper we shall give a few more specimens of the genuine Klephtic ballad, and then proceed to cull a wreath of more miscellaneous interest.

The National Magazine.

[The Editors of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE cannot return unavailable Papers, except in cases where it may seem desirable to communicate with the writers.]

WHAT, more poisoning, more cases of garotte and of wife-beating? Yes, it is even so. We might be ashamed (only that it is out of fashion to feel ashamed) to own how our type of crime has changed, and become essentially one of cowardice. The terrors of Hounslow Heath are a tradition. We no longer emulate the deeds of Turpin or Claude Duval. We pity the foolhardiness of Colonel Blood and Jack Sheppard. The bull-dog characteristic is wearing away. We do not affect that now. When we shoot a man, we prefer doing it from behind a wall; if we rob him, we do not stop him on the highway, pistol in hand, with the old-fashioned choice, "Your money or your life;" but we spring on him from behind, and throttle him as well as we can. It is a slight comfort that this detestable mode is still considered so un-English that we express it by a French name. But if the crime takes root, we may as well invent a word for it. We have taken to infernal machines and strychnine. Certainly the terror of those who are not yet garotted or poisoned has risen to the height when it becomes deadly; and Sir George Grey, who represents, we suppose, the feelings of the masses, has been hanging right and left with much impartiality. We dare not reckon up how many men have in the year of grace 1856 been put to the worst use to which it is said a man can be put. Perhaps these very men have perished on the scaffold mostly in order that ticket-of-leave men should still enjoy their liberty and breathe the pleasant

air of their native country. The same difference is beginning to be perceptible in warfare. Bull-dog courage is not less valued, but it obtains perhaps a less reward than skill and dexterity. Not only the valour to do, but the knowledge how and when to do, is prized; so that as gunpowder first insured death at a distance, so now revolvers multiply with terrible precision the number of deaths, and economise the time spent in doing it. We have altered even in our minor vices. We no longer drink until we are mad; we only smoke until we are stupid. We have raised our examinations, and lowered our regulation height. Paul, Sadleir, Robson, Redpath, Palmer, and Dove, are specimens of our present race of criminals; and it is undeniable that cowardice and subtlety are the characteristics of their offences.

This is the moral aspect of the age. Now let us regard the physical aspect. In the eyes of some it will merely present a coincidence; to the minds of others it will appear as the root and reason of that condition. It is a patent fact to the most idle of observers, that the treatment of disease is essentially different now to that which was practised 150 years since, and is suited to the asthenic type which in these times predominates. Fevers are principally of the low typhoid order, acute inflammatory diseases have decreased; while cholera and influenza have established themselves among us. Wine and brandy are prescribed in spite of what teetotalers say; and taken also, or refused under peril of death. Insanity, essentially a disease of debility, has largely increased, and though our extended population, and the accurate classification of our pauper-lunatics supply a reason for a part of that increase, there is still a large margin for which we are unable to account. Ask the next person you meet if he has no case near home of palsy, apoplexy, paralysis, epilepsy, and such diseases as depend more or less on the brain. If he answer truly, he will confess to more than one. The excessive use of tobacco has been urged as a reason for this; but perhaps with more plausibility than truth. We could not, if we would, stand the immense amount of drinking which our forefathers did. That *they* could was owing to their exercising the body considerably more than the brain, and to their out-of-door life. Sedatives or narcotics are the natural and appropriate remedies for cerebral excitement. Smoking promotes dreamy thought, and soothes the brain; hence, probably, the secret of its extensive increase. Philosophers have suggested as one cause the state of the atmosphere, and the greater cold and damp which have prevailed ever since the Lisbon earthquake: but this is but one of many. Our growing tendency to forsake the fields and dwell in large cities; the difficulty which thence arises of supplying pure air and water to the poorer classes; the unhealthy trades, and indoor life of our artisans,—these are the real causes. In fifty years all this has had time to tell; and the result is seen in our precocious children, our conceited and vicious youth, our stunted men, and in the shortened lives of our ablest and best men. No doubt cultivation is much more general, and intellectually much higher, than in the last century. In the present day, to obtain the chief honours in our universities demands, not only great and steady industry, but a brain of certain size and power, and some surplus of health. It is probable that in time our senior wranglers and double-firsts will not win their laurels without a sacrifice of youthful energy perilous in the extreme to the future man. Kirk White said that there ought to be a picture of Fame in the University Senate House, represented as concealing a *Death's-head* under a mask of beauty. Byron, Swift, Cowper, Laman Blanchard, Kirk White, Canning, form a group of examples. Scott said of himself, "Though the plough neared the end of the furrow, he was still urged on by the fixed habit of labour." Leland perished in a like struggle; and but a few weeks since one of our most industrious, learned, and kindest of spirits—Hugh Miller—has passed away.

Among the less cultivated, the highest knowledge and science have been simplified and popularised until the dis-

coveries of learned professors, and the laborious conclusions of our deepest thinkers, are A B C to the mass. The Eleusinian mysteries are profaned, and the multitude run riot. And precisely because minds grasp results which they have never needed to fag out for themselves, they lack the humility and reverence which that discipline grants to the hard-working student. The Germans have a proverb: *Doctor Luther's Schuhe sind nicht allen Dorfpriestern gerecht*,—"Not every parish-priest can wear Dr. Luther's shoes." "If at an altitude of 102 feet the barometer stands at 29.71, what would be the pressure to the square inch?" This was a question actually propounded by a self-educated pert youth to a certain professor of note. "Do you think I carry my head stuffed with facts for your convenience?" was the reply. "My boy, you need to learn how to learn." It is a pleasant thing to confess, on the other side of the question, that the increase of brain-work, and of thoughtfulness generally, though it has tended to deteriorate the animal, has also produced a greater amount of moral courage among a larger number of people than in former times. Thus the moral courage to desert a side, not because it is falling, but because it is false, is not wanting in these days. And those who call Sir Robert Peel and Newman apostates or traitors, with many a score of others of the most subtle intellect and purest moral character, must remember that they deserted for no reward, but, sure of opprobrium, of the upbraiding of their friends, and the scoffing of their adversaries. If this was not to obtain ease of conscience, what other dream did they hope to realise?

But to return once more to our subject. Figures go to prove that among a given number of persons a given number of crimes are annually committed. It is even tolerably certain that of these so many murders will be perpetrated with pokers, sticks, and such things as come first to hand, indicating sudden revenge; and so many by means of guns, knives, poisons, and the like, denoting more deliberate vengeance. It is also found that certain conditions pressing incidentally—such as scarcity, want of employment, epidemic disorders, political or religious excitement—will increase temporarily particular classes of crime. To those who have arrived at the conviction, that a certain extent of crime must always exist among a given number of people, and inquire no further, it is sufficient to urge, that though unquestionably what we call evil may never in the present life be wholly extirpated, nor that which we know as misery be banished entirely, it is well to remember that though "these offences must come, woe unto those by whom they come!" Since certain ascertained conditions increase evil, change or ameliorate those conditions, and you have the amount though not the existence of evil to contend with. Since there are many in whom the principle of right and wrong is naturally feeble, who require hope of immediate palpable reward to keep sober, to be clean, to act honestly, and fear of punishment to deter from violence and cruelty, and the indulgence of powerful propensities—in a word, since there are many in whom the cerebellum predominates over the cerebrum, it is manifestly the duty of those to whom wealth or talent or influence has been committed to use them for this end. Let the rich man give of his means. Let him who has moral strength show the way. Let the man who can work his brain, and the orator use his best speech. The work is not hard to find, or far to reach; it is near, to each man close at hand: let him do it with his might.

POLYGLOT READINGS IN PROVERBS.

DON'T LOSE A SHEEP FOR A HA'P'ORTH OF TAR.—This appears to be the true reading of the proverb, and to make better sense than the more current one, "Don't spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar." So much might save a sheep from the scab; but it is hard to conceive how the spoiling or not of a ship could be a question of a bit of tar more or less.

W. K. KELLY.

THE LOST DIAMONDS.

BY MRS. C. CROWE, AUTHOR OF "SUSAN HOPLEY," ETC.

III.

MRS. MIDDLEMAS could not believe her eyes, nor Maria either, when she discovered what was the matter. They had both seen Bassot place the diamonds in the box, and seal it up only a few days before. It had never been opened since. It was put into the jewel-case the same evening, and that was placed in a trunk, from which it was now first taken. The jewel-case had a Bramah lock; and the key was attached to her watch-chain, which was at the head of her bed by night, and round her neck by day; and yet the diamonds had disappeared. Somebody must have stolen them; but when? Certainly not since their arrival in England; for the trunk in which the jewel-case was packed had not been opened till that morning; she was still without a maid; and the keys had never been out of her own possession. "The Custom-house," suggested Maria; but Bunbury himself went to the Custom-house with the luggage, unlocked the trunks, and locked them again; and the jewel-case had never been opened,—for Mrs. M. had gone straight to the hotel, and the key was hanging to her chain. "They never took it out of the trunk, nor touched it," said Bunbury, on hearing of the calamity. "I was thinking what I should do for the key, if they wanted to open it."

Of course, when this sort of inexplicable thing happens, people can do nothing but wonder and talk and recapitulate all the circumstances; and when they have come to the end, begin over again.

"You know, we stood talking to Bassot whilst he put the diamonds in the silver-paper. I remember how neat and flat he folded it, turned up the two ends, and sealed them with a bit of green wax; my eyes were never off him for a moment."

"Nor mine either," said Maria.

"Then he folded the box in paper, and sealed that also, and then handed it to me. We can't be deceived in that: he certainly put them in. If I never see the diamonds again, I can't accuse him. I remember," she continued, after a pause, "that when I got home, I laid the bag on my bed; it had never been out of this hand till then since I left Bassot's shop; and there it lay till I was going to Laure's. Now, nobody could get into that bedroom without going through the *salon*, which we never left for a moment the whole afternoon."

"No," said Maria, "except when we were in the bedroom. It is impossible that any living thing but a mouse could have got at the bag without our seeing it."

"Then, I remember, when I had got my bonnet and cloak on, to go to Laure's, I took up the bag, for my purse was in it; and that as I was going through the *salon*, I remembered the diamonds; and I said it was no use walking through Paris with diamonds about me, and I took out the packet, and laid it on the table."

"And Tapp said he would stay and take care of them," said Maria.

"Very true; so he did," rejoined Mrs. Middlemas; but the tone of her voice was changed; she spoke slowly, as people do who are arriving at a conviction.

"And he never stirred out of the room, I am certain," pursued Maria. "Indeed, I recollect he said he had not when we returned. He said, 'Here I am, like a faithful watch-dog; I have never left my charge.'"

"He did; and he was the only person who ever saw the box, or who knew what was in it," said Mrs. M. significantly.

"If it had not been Bassot himself," began Maria, after a pause.

"It's nonsense to talk about Bassot, Maria," said Mrs. M. impatiently; "we know very well he has nothing to do with it."

"Well, but who has? It's impossible to fix upon any body."

"Hum! Somebody must have done it, you know," said Mrs. M., looking at Maria with a peculiar significance.

"Who?" said Maria, whilst the blood rushed to her face; for she was struck with Mrs. M.'s expression.

"It must be somebody, you know, who had access to the box. Now, whilst it was in my bag, you must admit, nobody could get at it, unless they were magicians, and could make themselves invisible."

"Well, I know they could not," replied Maria; "I don't know what you are driving at."

"And certainly nobody could have got at it whilst it was in the dressing-case, and the dressing-case in that trunk; you'll admit that, I suppose."

"Of course I admit it," said Maria, drawing up her head and looking steadily at Mrs. M. "And what then?"

"Only that the diamonds are gone, that's all."

"I see what you mean," said Maria, bursting into tears; "I could not have believed such a thing."

"Nor I either," rejoined Mrs. M. coolly.

"I mean, that I could not have believed you would be so cruel, so insulting, so unjust!" sobbed Maria.

"You may say it's cruel, insulting, and unjust, Maria; but do me the favour to tell me, who ever had a moment's opportunity to take the diamonds, or who could have any motive for stealing the contents of that little insignificant-looking box in preference to all my jewels and valuable things, which they might quite as easily have taken? He did not know they were for you, nor you either; because, till I got your papa's letter about them, I would not mention it, for fear he might say I was not to give them to you."

"I have always known you hated him, and wished to separate us," sobbed Maria.

"I own I never approved of the match," said Mrs. M. "You could not expect I should—a penniless fellow, of no family, and nothing in the world to recommend him. You know the distress it has occasioned your father; and now that this has happened—"

"Now that what has happened?" said Maria fiercely.

"You may be as indignant as you please, Maria; but you cannot alter facts. You know, as well as I do, that nobody else *could* have taken the diamonds."

Maria's faith was strong; she could not for a moment believe it; and yet what Mrs. M. said was unanswerable. Nobody could have had access to them but Tapp; he alone knew any thing of them at all; he alone knew where they were; and alone he was left in the room, with the box lying on the table, for three-quarters of an hour; he had plenty of time to open the paper it was enveloped in, and to seal it up again. There were wax and matches in the room.

Overcome with grief, indignation, and perplexity, Maria retired to her room; and after indulging herself with what ladies call a good cry, she sat down to write to Tapp, who had left London for Portsmouth, where his brother, a lieutenant in the navy, was then residing. She told him of the loss of the diamonds, and of their great perplexity as to what had become of them; but she could not bring herself to hint Mrs. M.'s suspicions. She begged him to write by return of post, which he did, saying he was very sorry, and that it was very strange, &c. &c.; but on the whole treating the matter very lightly, as Mrs. M. indignantly said; which apparent indifference, Maria held, went to prove his innocence; while her mamma, of course, held a directly opposite opinion.

"It's his interest to make light of it," said Mrs. M.

"He doesn't see what he has to do with it," said Maria.

"Besides, he doesn't set any value on such things."

"He sets some value on money, I suppose; and I presume he's aware that diamonds are very saleable articles. There are plenty of Jews at Portsmouth. I thought he was in a great hurry to get away. Besides, it's such a convenient place for sending them out of the country: I dare say they are across the Channel by this time."

Great as was Maria's indignation and faith, she had nothing to answer. There was no denying that appear-



CALAIS PIER. BY J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

ances were very much against Tapp, and that, in short, nobody else *could* have taken them; yet she could not believe that he had; and all she could do was to say so.

"Well," said Mrs. M., "the loss of the diamonds is very serious; but there is a much more serious consideration involved in the business than that. Of course you will not marry a man that lies under such a stigma."

"I shall certainly not give up my engagement," said Maria.

"I think you had better consider a little," replied Mrs. M. "Of course, neither I nor your father can ever give our consent to, or in any way countenance, the connection. Your aunt, I am quite sure, when she hears what has happened, —and I shall write to her immediately,—will withdraw her consent; so, setting aside all other considerations, I should like to know what you are to live on?"

"We shall find the means to live, I dare say," said Maria.

"Well, certainly you may, I forgot that: if Captain Tapp is a dexterous hand at this sort of thing, he will find the means to live for a time; but that is but a precarious mode of subsistence, you know, and it's apt to end in a visit to the colonies."

Maria's iterations, that she did not believe in his guilt, of course, were of no avail, in face of the unanswerable proofs Mrs. M. could allege. Miss Darnley, horror-struck, withdrew her consent from the match; and Colonel M. was written to on the subject. The poor girl could do nothing but weep; she could not bear to tell Tapp of the conviction that prevailed, which he did not seem to suspect, or passed over in silence; whilst Mrs. M. was unwilling to take any legal steps, for fear of making public an affair that would connect Miss Middlemas's name with such a low-born contemptible scoundrel as Tapp.

"I wonder if I could convince you of this man's guilt," said Mrs. Middlemas, after some reflection, "whether you would be willing to give him up?"

"Certainly," said Maria; "I wouldn't marry a thief; but it is because—"

"Well, never mind arguing the point now. But I am determined to go back to Paris, and put the affair into the hands of the police; for indubitably it was there the diamonds were stolen: but, before I speak to the police, we'll go to Alexis, and hear what he says about it. He was certainly the means of finding Madame de T—'s bracelet; he described the woman that had taken it, and told when and where it was stolen."

"With all my heart," said Maria, who, having witnessed several successful experiments, had a thorough belief in clairvoyance; and if he says that Tapp took them, I'll believe him; but I am certain he will not."

The next day they started for Paris, leaving their luggage at the hotel, and mentioning their design to nobody whatever. If any body inquired for them, the waiter had orders to say that they had gone out of town for a few days.

On their arrival, they drove to the hotel they had formerly inhabited, but made no allusion whatever to the loss they had sustained; and the following morning they were the earliest visitors Alexis received. Being put to sleep, and his attention directed to Mrs. Middlemas, he said, "I see you have lost something; it's something of value; it's something bright—how it shines! Ah, they are jewels—you have been robbed!"

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Middlemas, whilst Maria's heart beat with anxiety.

"And can you see the thief?" inquired Mrs. M.

"You lost them here in Paris. I see the room; it's a large room, and there's a door open to another room; there are a great many things on the table, and the jewels are there too, in a little box. He should not open the box."

"Who?" said Mrs. Middlemas.

"The thief. He has taken the jewels, and put them in his waistcoat-pocket."

"Can you describe him?" said the mesmeriser.

"He's short, not thin; he has not much hair; I think he is a soldier—yes, he's a soldier."

Mrs. Middlemas nodded her head, as much as to say, "I knew it;" whilst Maria sat pale and trembling, overcome with grief and astonishment.

"And can you see where the jewels are now?" inquired Mrs. M.

Alexis said yes, that he could see they were in a box with a great deal of other jewellery, and that box was in another large box; but he did not succeed in conveying an idea of where these boxes were to be found. However, the information, as far as it went, was decisive. Alexis could never have seen or heard of Tapp in his life; it was utterly impossible he could have learnt their loss, as they had mentioned it to no one in Paris, and only to their own family in England. The evidence appeared to Mrs. Middlemas irresistible; and even Maria felt that she could not reject it. The next day they had an interview with the chief inspector of the *arrondissement*, and told him the story. He expressed a strong conviction that *ce Monsieur* was the thief. Naturally; for who else could it be? And when he heard he was no longer in Paris, observed that it was much to be regretted, as his absence greatly diminished their chance of recovering the jewels. However, he promised that every diligence should be used, and immediate inquiries made amongst the receivers and others, in case he had disposed of them before he left France. He proposed also that the police in London and Portsmouth should be put in possession of the circumstance.

"What could you do more if he were here?" said Mrs. M.; "for I don't wish any publicity given to this affair, for particular reasons, though I should be very glad to prove his guilt, and also to get back the diamonds."

"We should have him under surveillance; we should know all his goings and comings, all his associations and resorts," said the official; "we should ascertain what money he had, or had spent."

The revelations of Alexis, and the conviction of the shrewd inspector, produced their natural effect on Maria. Unwilling as she was to do so, there was no alternative but to believe her lover had taken the diamonds. But now a new idea occurred to her: he had doubtless done it as a jest, to frighten and perplex them. He was certainly not habitually a joker, practical or otherwise; but he might have taken a fancy to exhibit himself in that character for once; so she resolved to write to him, assuming that view of the case, saying that they had discovered his jest through the revelations of Alexis, blaming him for carrying it so far, and requesting him to write by return of post if he had them, of which fact she felt no doubt. Thus, she thought, if he has taken them in jest, he will exonerate himself; and even if it was not in jest, this will give him an opportunity of returning them. By the same post, unknown to the ladies, the French inspector notified the circumstance to the chief of the London police, who lost no time in conveying the information to the inspector at Portsmouth.

On the third day after these letters had been despatched, Tapp entered the *salon*, where Mrs. M. and Maria were sitting at breakfast, in a state of extreme fluster and agitation. He said he had started immediately on receipt of the letter, and protested violently against the supposition that he had the diamonds. His protestations, however, produced no effect on Mrs. Middlemas; the diamonds had been taken, and it was morally impossible that any body else could have taken them. The circumstantial evidence was as strong as circumstantial evidence could be; even the police said there could be no doubt as to the fact. "If you choose to return them," she said, "we shall consider the affair as a jest, and you shall hear no more about it; if you do not, you must take the consequences." Tapp maintained his innocence; appealed to the evidence of his former life, of which, however, they knew very little; and urged the cruelty of branding him with such a crime, when they had no evidence that he had committed it. Mrs. M. answered that many a man

had been hanged upon less; she became very angry; Tapp covered his face with his hands and wept, and Maria kept him company.

"Perhaps you had debts," said Mrs. M., "and you wanted to discharge them before your marriage." He declared he had no debts. "Perhaps not now; you may have sold the diamonds, and paid them; but only confess it, to relieve our minds from anxiety, and I promise that no further steps shall be taken in the business."

But her entreaties and Maria's tears availed nothing; he swore that he had not taken them at all, neither in jest nor in earnest; nor ever even touched the packet, which he admitted Mrs. M. had left on the table when she went to Laure's. This scene lasted some hours; and at the end of it he went away, saying he should go and give himself up to the police. But the police declined taking him into custody. They left him free, which answered their purpose better. But he soon became aware that every step he took was watched; and it appeared to him that every body was in the conspiracy against him. He thought the people at the hotel where he lodged looked suspiciously on him; and the *garçon* at the *Café Anglais*, where he dined, had his eye upon him. If he passed a *sergent-de-ville* in the street, the man turned his head to look after him. If he went into a shop to make a purchase, he saw the people took him for a thief, and followed his movements with suspicion. Wherever he went, whatever he did, he felt he was never alone. He had no motive for staying in Paris; he wished to return to his brother at Portsmouth, whom he had so hastily quitted; but he was doubtful whether he should be permitted to depart. However, driven to desperation, he at length resolved to try, and he found no obstacle placed in his way; but when he went to Lafitte's for his money, the clerk that took his paper looked up sharply over his spectacles when he read the name; and when he took his tickets at the railway, he observed a man standing beside him, who followed him to the carriage, and never lost sight of him till the train started. He took his ticket to London, where he saw a policeman whispering to the cabman who drove him to his hotel; and he had not been at Portsmouth half-an-hour before he observed another talking to the cook through the area-rails.

In the meanwhile Mrs. Middlemas and her daughter returned to London, where, alas! there was no necessity to purchase a *trousseau* now; and after a short stay there, they proceeded to Yorkshire, where they intended remaining some time with their relation before they left England. Mrs. Middlemas was going to rejoin her husband; and Maria, wretched and ashamed, had consented to go with her. "I don't believe in his guilt," she said; "I never will; but I know I can't marry a man lying under such a stigma; and therefore it's better I should go with you."

When the time approached for their departure, Maria, who had broken off all communication with her lover, could not resist the temptation to write him a farewell letter, saying that appearances were unfortunately so much against him that she could not act in opposition to the opinions of her family; and that therefore, as their engagement was terminated, she was going to India with Mrs. M.; that she hoped he might form another that would be conducive to his happiness; and that it might be a satisfaction to him to know that, in spite of the strong circumstantial evidence adduced, she could not bring herself to believe in his guilt.

This letter she addressed to the care of his brother, at Portsmouth, and she looked anxiously for an answer; but none arrived; and as she had informed him of the period they had fixed for the termination of their visit, she concluded he had either not received her letter, or that he was too much hurt and too indignant to write. This gave her a great deal of pain; for she had a longing desire to hear from him once more before she set out on her long journey, which was to be on the ensuing day; and as she sat in the bed-chamber occupied by herself, and Mrs. Middlemas, surrounded by trunks and boxes, and all the litter of a great

packing-up, she thought sadly of her disappointed expectations and blighted hopes. Her habits and her tastes wholly unfitted her for that life in India which Mrs. M. described as so agreeable. She was leaving the friends of her youth for strangers; for even her father she had been very little with; and she felt that, though she should be living in his family, she should never feel herself of it. Then she thought of her lover. She was confident he was not habitually dishonest; and if he *had* taken the diamonds, it must have been under some extraordinary pressure of circumstances,—the relief of his brother, perhaps, who she knew was very much embarrassed by a narrow income and large family—two things which are dreadfully apt to go together. But no, he had not taken them; nothing but his own confession should ever convince her of his guilt; and if he was innocent, how cruel, O, how cruel it was! with that warm and affectionate heart, that simple unsophisticated nature, that shy and susceptible temperament. She knew he was not handsome, though in her eyes it was a good honest countenance. She knew he was not polished up to the mark of a fine gentleman; but his manners partook of his character: he was too good-natured to be ill-bred. And he was so alone in the world; for what acquaintance he had were in the village where Miss Darnley lived, and where he would no more appear. He had no relations but the poor brother at Portsmouth; and she herself had been his hope and his mainstay for five years, during which they had kept their engagement secret, knowing it would be disapproved. "And how he relied on me!" And she wept and sobbed till her aunt's little dog Spot, who was lying under the bed, crawled out, and, rising on his hind-legs and placing his fore-feet on her lap, looked up with his large brown eyes, expressing wonder and commiseration, into her face.

"Ah, Spot," she said, with that melting of the heart that makes us greet with welcome the humblest sympathy; "ah, Spot, he was always kind to you, and you loved him! What nice walks we had together, Spot,—hadn't we?—through the green lanes and over the broad fields, when you used to scamper away after the hares and rabbits that you never caught! Ah, Spot, there'll be no more such walks for us!" But Spot seemed to take a more hopeful view of the case; he wagged his tail cheerfully, and seemed to be of Gripp's opinion, that we should never say die. Relieved by her tears, Maria dried her eyes, and set to work once more at her packing, while Spot crawled back under the bed.

We are all more or less disposed to melancholy on the eve of a long journey. Parting with people or places that we may never see again, even when we don't care much about them, arouses recollections and reflections that soften and sadden the heart; and this mood of mind is not diminished by the air of discomfort that usually pervades the house on these occasions, and the irregularity that deranges the establishment. Even dogs are sensible to this influence, and generally fall into low spirits when they observe symptoms of a great move.

"By the by, where's Spot?" said Miss Darnley, as they sat in silence over the fire after dinner; for she had been thinking what an unfortunate thing this broken engagement was for her. If Maria had married Tapp, the young couple were to have lived with her; in fact, in countenancing the connection, she was not quite free from selfish motives. She loved her niece, and they perfectly suited each other. She knew it was not such a match as the colonel expected for his daughter; but she firmly believed Maria and her lover were calculated to make each other happy; and their pecuniary interests she was herself able to provide for. "Now," thought she, "I shall pass my latter days in solitude, with nobody but poor Spot for my companion." But this put her in mind of the dog, and she remembered that he had had no dinner. "Poor fellow!" she said, "he never could bear packing; the sight of trunks and litter always takes away his appetite."

"I think he's under our bed," said Maria; "I'll go and fetch him."

"You had better take a candle; you'll fall over the boxes," said Mrs. Middlemas.

"No," said Maria, "I'll only go to the door and call him."

"Spot, Spot!" said she; and immediately she heard the dog crawl from under the bed. "Poor fellow!" she added, patting him as he came to her feet; "come with me, and I'll give you some dinner,—it's the last dinner I shall ever give you, I dare say;" and wagging his tail, Spot followed her down-stairs and into the dining-room, where he was very civilly received, and his dinner presented to him.

After he had eaten it, and refreshed himself with a little water from his basin, which stood under the sideboard, he drew towards the fire, by which they were sitting, and having turned round four or five times, curled himself up on the hearth-rug, and lay down.

"What's that shining on Spot's ear?" said Miss Darnley, as the firelight gleamed on the dog's head. "Come here, Spot; let me see what it is you've got there. I declare it's a bit of glass entangled in Spot's curls;" and she picked out the bit of glass. "And here's another bit. Has there been a glass broken in your room?"

"No," said Mrs. Middlemas; "not that I know of?"

"Here's some more of it sticking in his frill," said Miss Darnley, feeling about the dog's throat. "Do ring the bell, Maria; let us have candles; he may lick himself, and swallow some of it."

So the candles were brought, and the little bits of glass picked out and laid on the table.

"How they shine!" said the ladies, taking them up and examining them.

"Is it glass?" said Miss Darnley; "I don't think it's glass: they appear to be crystals. Look, when they are all together;" and she put them in a cluster. "Why, they might be taken for diamonds!"

"I don't know what it is," said Mrs. Middlemas; "I think it must be glass."

"It's out of your room; for Spot's been there all day. Run up, Maria, and see if there is any more of it."

Maria, who had at first not paid much attention to what was going on, at the word *diamonds* had approached the table, and taken one of these shining atoms in her hand. She rolled it between her finger and thumb, and satisfied herself that it was not glass: it was perfectly smooth and polished; if it had been broken glass, the edges must have been rough. Then she looked at them clustered together; and she observed, when the light fell on them, that they reflected various hues. There were six or seven of these shining atoms found entangled in the dog's hair. What could they be? She took up the candle, and walked slowly up-stairs, with a sort of vague feeling of, not hope, but wonder and curiosity; for she believed in her heart that they were actually diamonds; and if they were, they could scarcely be any other diamonds than the lost ones, for they had no others unset. But then it was impossible: where could they have been all this time? Somebody must have taken them out of the box in the first instance; and that person could, it was proved, have been nobody but Tapp. Suddenly a dreadful thought struck her. He *had* taken them, and this was the means he had adopted to get rid of them, and escape further detection and trouble. He had, in some way, got them conveyed into the house, and probably into their bed-chamber. He had several acquaintance in the neighbourhood, and had probably induced one of them to undertake this enterprise for him; or he might have bribed one of the servants to do it. Her heart turned sick at the thought of this confirmation of her lover's guilt. With a pale cheek and trembling hand she opened the door of the bed-chamber; and stretching out her arm with the candle, so that the light should be diffused, she looked around the room, but no shining objects presented themselves. Then she examined the carpet; nothing of the sort. Lastly, she lifted the valance of the bed. Ah, here indeed was the nest from which Spot had purloined those bright feathers! There was a cluster of them, together

with bits of torn paper and unconsidered rubbish, that in the course of a week's packing, during which the housemaid had been forbidden to touch any thing, had got kicked under the bed. With a feeling of intense grief at this overwhelming proof of Tapp's unworthiness, Maria summoned Mrs. Middlemas and her aunt up-stairs. "Look under the bed," she said, holding up the valance, and throwing the light of the candle on the stones.

"Good heavens!" said Mrs. Middlemas; "it's certainly the diamonds;" and she stretched out her hand to draw them out. "How in the world could they come there?"

"There!" exclaimed Miss Darnley; "and how you have accused that poor fellow, Tapp, of stealing them, and you had them yourself all the while."

"But it is impossible," said Mrs. M.; "every thing has been packed and unpacked and packed again; besides, how could they get out of the box? There must be more: look, Maria, the largest of them is not here. Pull out all that litter; it's the most incomprehensible thing!"

Maria said nothing; she would not be the first to suggest how they got there; it would probably be discovered soon enough. "Here's the box," she said; "Bassot's box."

"I remember, I threw it on the floor yesterday when I was packing the jewel-case," said Mrs. M., as Maria handed out the lower half of the box, and then the cover.

"And Spot's been gnawing it," said Maria.

"He always gnaws something when he is forgotten at dinner," said Miss Darnley; "I think it's to teach us not to do it again."

"O," cried Maria, rising from her knees, "O, look, mamma! look, aunt! they've been here all the while!—they've been here all the while!" and sitting down on the side of the bed, she burst into tears.

It was quite true; the diamonds had never been out of the box where Bassot had placed them. He had sealed the bit of silver-paper in which he had folded them; and when he put on the cover of the box the little packet had stuck fast to the top by the warm wax. There it was still, adhering by the same green wax, though happily torn by Spot in impatience for his dinner. The remaining diamonds were found in its folds.

We will not dwell on all the emotions of joy and remorse to which this strange discovery gave rise. Letters were immediately despatched to Portsmouth explanatory and apologetic; the voyage was given up for the present; and Tapp was invited to present himself without delay. But in a few days an answer came from the brother, saying that the poor fellow had been so broken-hearted about the whole thing, and was so possessed by the belief that the police were after him, that he had left England without telling where he was going; "'for,' said he, 'if I am inquired for, you can then say with truth you don't know where I am. If I find myself uncomfortable on the continent, I shall go to America; but if I do, I promise to write to you.' Therefore," said the brother, "I think he is still in Europe, though where I have no idea. He knew he could never prove his innocence, and expected to live and die with this stigma upon him."

The discovery of the diamonds had taken place about three months previous to my meeting them; and in spite of Bunbury's travels, Tapp had not been traced, which I thought might be owing to the delicacy with which they conducted their investigations. They were afraid, if any vague rumour of pursuit reached him, he might leave Europe.

The information I had to give was of course most joyfully received, and they were encouraged to undertake a fresh campaign by the hope it inspired. They left Vevay the next day, to return towards the Rhine; whilst I was left to meditate on these strange events, and on the curious trifles which often decide our destiny. What would have become of Tapp, and what would have been Maria's fate, if Mrs. Middlemas had not thrown that box on the floor; or if Spot had been called down to dinner at the usual time?

Who can tell? Certainly the whole course of their lives would have been changed.

I thought of the extraordinary error of Alexis, too. I have never seen him; but I have witnessed many wonderful phenomena of that description, and I concluded that it was a case of thought-reading. He was placed in *rappor*t with Mrs. Middlemas, and gave back her own impressions.

Some time afterwards I heard, with great satisfaction, that the poor injured Tapp had been discovered at a hydro-pathic establishment on the Rhine, where he had gone to avoid English travellers, and also with a hope of obtaining some relief from the state of nervous disorder to which these events had reduced him.

The wedding was fixed for an early day, and I shortly afterwards received two cards, united by a bow of white ribbon, which I suppose was the supreme fashion at the village of B—. They were inscribed with the names of Captain and Mrs. Tapp.

TERROR IN THE TILL.

REVOLUTION is a catching disease. When it once breaks out in your neighbourhood, you never know who will take it next; yourself, perhaps. And the after-consequences of an old revolution in former times are almost as bad as the effects of a recent eruption at the present day; they are apt to show themselves when least expected, and to betray a constitutional taint where we never dreamt of looking for it. Charles I.'s decapitation was made the precedent for guillotining Louis XVI.; and the two together will serve as a joint example for some unhappy monarch one of these days. But that ugly grim French revolution not only violated the unity of royal and aristocratic necks, it did worse in some folks' opinion,—it rifled people's pockets, it touched their tills. Citizens and citizenesses were compelled to buy and sell in novel coins and weights and measures of unheard-of relative proportions. Nothing but tens, and multiples or decimal fractions of tens, were permitted to pass current by the *Assemblée Constituante*; and the result was, a system of decimal moneys, measures, and weights, which endure, and are even approved of, to this day.

It was hard upon the vested interests of the old-established coin to be thus swept away into annihilation. The plea was the old one—necessity, that it served the culprits right, and that they richly deserved their fate. For it must be confessed that coins current, like feudal tyrants, may sometimes reach the point of unbearable; men can put up with their exacting and impracticable nature no longer. The Code Napoleon and the decimal system of coins, weights, and measures, founded on the METRE (or the ten-millionth part of the earth's meridian from equator to pole), have conferred such inestimable blessings wherever they have been adopted, that we will not now too nicely discuss the price at which they were originally purchased. I will put a few questions to the point.

Have you ever travelled through Switzerland and the minor states of Germany? What do you think of the small change there? How did you get on when you crossed the frontier out of one grand duchy or canton into another? Did you ever find you were able to dispose of your foreign cash in hand at a premium? Are not batzen, groschen, silber-groschen, schelings, bloutzgers, rappen (whence the phrase, "I don't care a rap"), gulden, kreutzers, florins, sols, and the rest of their mis-minted race, enough to make a man curse the day when coppers in general, and base silver tokens in particular, were invented? Do you think you ever got your fair change, or half of it, out of a silver five-franc piece or a golden sovereign? And did you bewail your destiny, or bless your stars, on escaping out of the monetary labyrinth into Belgium, France, Geneva, or Sardinia, where decimal francs and centimes are the national currency?

Things are not quite so bad as that in England; but we

have still had enough to worry our patience. We have such harmonious and consistent proportional parts as, five yards and a half make one rod, pole, or perch; twelve ounces make one pound troy, while sixteen ounces make one pound avoirdupois; and for every-day convenience, we have the simple and rational combinations,—so uniform and easy for foreigners and children to learn,—of four farthings make one penny, twelve pence make one shilling, and twenty shillings make one pound. Verily the pence and shilling tables are a fascinating study,—such as you give to good boys and girls as a pleasing recreation, and as a reward for having said their lessons well. Nay, some worthy Dominies of the olden school consider the shilling-table far too easy, and see a radical defect in the decimal element which enters into its constitution.

It is further back than yesterday that a monetary revolution has been threatening to break forth, even in our own beloved anti-revolutionary island. Murmurs, not loud, but deep, have been heard to issue from the lips of people who think themselves, justly, somebody. Conspiracies have been hatched in high places, in dark places, and in light ones too; for an international convention held its sittings in the Palais d'Industrie at Paris, during the Great Exposition there. To be brief, our tills and cash-boxes are seriously menaced with a thorough reform, which will completely change the aspect of compound addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, not to mention reduction, practice, and tare and tret. "Woe's me!" shouts the ciphering-master in an awful fright. "My bread will be snatched out of my mouth, if a decimal system of accounts be adopted. I must have compensation, or a retiring pension. It is a barefaced robbery, of which we, poor pedagogues, are the innocent victims!"

For the present, the evil day is staved off a little while, by a combination of bankers, who patriotically consult their own convenience, and have voted, when referred to by high authority, that things shall continue in *statu quo*. But the English plan of progress is, to move on slowly and surely. The coinage-reform may not come immediately; but, sooner or later, come it will. Meanwhile the revolutionists are slightly divided among themselves, though rather apparently than really so. Some say, "Take the sovereign as the starting point, and found a decimal coinage on subdivisions of that respectable piece;" in which case the penny must be sacrificed. Others, more democratic in principle, say, "No; the penny is the people's coin. At all events, we will be true to our coppers. Make a decimal coinage out of multiples of pence, if you like. You will have to throw the sovereign overboard; no matter."

Terror is in the till; the trembling money-counters speculate as to whose doom it will be to be immolated first. As often happens, the lowest in rank are the loudest in their lamentations and appeals for mercy.

"Help!" cries the penny in an agony of apprehension.

"Help! Murder! Fire! Thieves!"

"And pray," we answer, "what's the cause of all this riot, you brazen-throated representative of George III.?"

"Why this, sir; although I wish you would mind your own business, instead of interfering with mine. During a late session of parliament, on the motion of Mr. William Brown, the great Liverpool merchant, and one of the members for Lancashire, a resolution was carried in favour of a decimal coinage. A committee of inquiry was consequently appointed, at the head of which Lord Overstone,—better known as Mr. Jones Lloyd, the great London banker,—presided. It would be the business of the committee to obtain information from every quarter, and to report in favour of what it might consider the most eligible plan for the introduction of a decimal system of book-keeping and accounts. Of course any recommendation of this committee would have much weight in influencing parliament in its final decision. It is right this should be generally known; because within another year or two perhaps we shall have an act of parliament in force establishing a decimal system."

"Do you really think so, my dear Mr. Penny? I only wish we may get it."

"You do, do you? I don't; that is, not exactly. I therefore advert to this important matter, in order to call public attention to what seems strangely overlooked by the press, and in public discussions of every kind; although there can hardly be any public question of greater importance, or which more concerns the interest and convenience of every individual in this country."

"Very well declaimed, Penny Brown, Esquire; but what is this point so strangely neglected by the press, and in public dis—?"

"I advert to it, sir, inasmuch as Mr. Brown (no relative of mine—I disown him!) urged upon the House of Commons the propriety of adopting a system which involved in its establishment the disarrangement of me, the present penny. He proposed to retain the pound unaltered, but to divide it into a thousand instead of nine hundred and sixty parts, as at present; thus inevitably deranging the value of the nearest equivalent to the penny four per cent, less or more. At present there are two hundred and forty pence in the pound. The new plan gives two hundred and fifty pence, decreasing the value of each penny in proportion. I will not submit to be so degraded."

"But surely you will yield a little, to accommodate your superiors in pecuniary rank?"

"Don't talk to me about superiors. I say the disarrangement and inconvenience which would ensue, should the member for Lancashire's treasonable plan become law, on a vast number of small payments is very obvious; and the injustice—the inevitable injustice—such a system would induce is a matter of no small importance. I warn my countrymen what they may expect should there be no decided expression of public opinion in favour of me, the existing penny, who have no desire to become the late Mr. Penny; for it is understood the views of all the members of the committee are in favour of retaining the pound, dividing its nine hundred and sixty farthings into a thousand, and thus entirely superseding the penny. Yes; don't treat the matter lightly. I warn you, the infringement of my (Penny's) rights will be the break-up of the British Constitution. The banishment and expulsion of the penny will be followed by the same disastrous results as the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, the last total eclipse of the moon, the introduction of railways, the great comet, free-trade in corn, and the winding-sheet on my grandfather's rushlight."

"But do you mean to say that we are to abandon decimals altogether, in order to preserve untouched the entailed inheritance of the Penny family? Have you the face (whatever you may have the reverse) to say that decimal accounts, weights, and measures, are not desirable for Great Britain to adopt?"

"Not quite that, sir. The importance of a correct system of decimal coinage and accounts can hardly, I own, be over-estimated, and must shortly inevitably engage the serious attention of the mercantile community. There can be no question of the vast convenience of decimal book-keeping, compared with the mode at present in use; but, sir, in adopting the change, it would be infinitely more easily effected, and inconceivably more convenient, could it be accomplished in a way not necessarily to require the setting aside of any of our existing coinage; and above all, so as not to interfere with the present penny. It is atrocious on the part of Mr. Brown to retain the pound, but to alter the value of the penny. It is a base violation of all national feeling."

"Nonsense!"

"You may call it nonsense; but I tell you that it will be found much more important to preserve inviolate the penny than the pound. Such an arrangement would occasion infinitely less inconvenience to, and misapprehension among, uneducated people. Rather more than a century ago, when the adjustment of the style took place, there were very large numbers of the people who honestly believed that

they had been cheated out of eleven days of their September in that year; the same will be the case with the Pennyites, if you depreciate their favourite coin at the rate of four per cent."

"And so the enlightened and well-informed portion of the community is to yield to the prejudices of the ignorant. Had you not better instruct them a little in the real state of the case?"

"I know nothing about that. I only know that no later than fifteen years ago, when a new copper coinage was obtained for the Isle of Man,—when the old fourteen-pence Manx to the English shilling was assimilated to our currency,—there were in consequence actual riots in the island, far more serious, comparatively speaking, than any of the Sunday demonstrations in Hyde Park. The calculation there was clear and explicit—three-pence-halfpenny Manx equal to three-pence British; yet there are Manx people, even at the present day, who speak of the measure in bitter scorn, as having robbed them of their twopence to the shilling."

"But as we are to have a thousand pretty little new coins, to be called 'mils,' instead of nine hundred and sixty farthings, people would be much more reasonable were they to rejoice at having gained forty 'mils' in the pound."

"Mere sophistry, sir, which will persuade nobody. Should the value of the penny be altered, so that there can be no precise equivalent, the people will persist in the belief that decimals are only an attempt to injure them for the benefit of the rich; and the allegation would not be entirely unfounded. Why should the rich man be enabled to compute his pounds as heretofore, while the poor man is called upon to pay his penny and a fifth, most probably his penny and a quarter, postage for his letter or his newspaper, in place of a simple penny? It would be a tax of four-and-twenty or five-and-twenty per cent, falling almost exclusively upon the poor, for the convenience of the rich and the middle classes. There will always be an insuperable difficulty in introducing a demical coinage, if the present PENNY is in any way interfered with. Mark me; you will, and shall have penny riots, perhaps a penny revolution, if you dare to touch the sacred penny."

"Who would have thought that an honest penny would have ever turned firebrand and agitator! In the first place, is it quite a fact that it is poor people who pay the penny postage? And are you sure that that same postage would not be reduced a fraction, instead of increased a fraction? But please just have the goodness to inform us how you would patch up a coalition between decimals and pence."

"Easily enough. I have two plans; both admirable. The first, without being exactly a decimal system, would closely approximate to it, without interfering with the present coinage in any respect. Let accounts be kept in crowns and pence; the crown, value five shillings, equal to sixty pence. According to the proposed method, the sovereign would be equal to four crowns ·00 pence; the crown would be expressed thus, 1·00; the halfcrown, 0·30; the shilling, 0·12; the penny, 0·01; the halfpenny, 0·00½; and the farthing, 0·00¼. The pence-column must be added, and divided by sixty, the quotient (crowns) carried forward, and the remainder (pence) set down. This would be a very near approach to a decimal system, and would embrace many of its conveniences."

"Whew! you make me whistle Lillabullero, like Uncle Toby. Decimals, by Irish arithmetic! A multiplication table made of india-rubber, and stretched cornerwise, so as to make twice two are five, and twice three are seven! Certainly a very near approach, a close shave, to decimal accounts, with four farthings (in vulgar fractions) to a penny, and sixty pence to a crown! You would get, however, still nearer to decimals were you to take either nine or eleven pence to the shilling, and either nine or eleven shillings to the pound. My dear Mr. Penny, you must be joking."

"Never was more in earnest in my life. But I perceive, sir, you are determined to find fault with every thing that I

propose. However, you cannot refuse to accept my second proposition of victorines and mils."

"Victorines! Do you mean fur-tippets?"

"No, sir; I am shocked at your levity. I say we can establish a perfect system of decimals and decimal book-keeping without disturbing our present coinage in any respect. Suppose we reckon in victorines (value four shillings and twopence) and mils (halfpence), value as at present, there would be a hundred mils in the victorine. Mr. Brown's thousand-mil system would involve three or four (?) decimals, and this of itself would become an inconvenience tending to inevitable confusion; whereas the same end may be accomplished by this invention of mine, without altering or interfering with the penny, that is to say, with the halfpenny. By this system no present coin need be withdrawn. A new silver coin, the victorine, sufficiently dissimilar not to be readily mistaken for the present five-shilling or crown piece, might be issued. It would perhaps be more simple, and answer every purpose, to continue to reckon farthings in vulgar fractions. A farthing might be called a demi or half mil."

"Very simple indeed, to have two silver coins current at the same time, one equal to four and twopence, and the other equal to five shillings! Very simple to have vulgar fractions in one column and decimal fractions in the next! Go on, brave Penny!"

"The method of expression would stand thus: the sovereign would be 4 victorines 80 mils; the half-sovereign, 2·40; the shilling, 0·24; the penny, 0·02; and the farthing, 0·00½."

"And so, dear Penny, to save yourself, you would make the sovereign an odd number; that is, a value which is not a multiple of your unit, the victorine?"

"O, that's a trifle! In any conceivable alteration of the coinage which may be proposed there will always be some obstacles to surmount."

"Perfectly true. And therefore we may as well take the trouble of surmounting them for the attainment of a wise system rather than a foolish one."

"But mine is wise, and easy too. The process of conversion from £ s. d. into victorines and mils is very easy. Reduce the sum to halfpence, strike off the two right-hand figures, which are mils; those to the left are victorines. You may perhaps say that this is not strictly an original plan, but a sort of imitation of the American dollar of a hundred cents, or of the French franc of a hundred centimes. What if it be? There is nothing absolutely original in the system of decimals; adaptability is of more importance than originality. And what originality is there in dividing what is now nine hundred and sixty into a thousand, unless it be an originality in needless confusion and positive injustice? The American and French systems are both equally excellent, and better than any thing we can create at the expense of disarranging the important penny. Should parliament pass a decimal law, setting aside the present penny, the legislature neither would nor could (except in the exercise of a liberality or an injustice which the country would not submit to) at the same time sanction a universal reduction, or a general imposition of four per cent on all present payments. Besides this, the inconvenience, misunderstanding, and confusion which such a law would inevitably occasion among small traders and the humbler classes of society would arouse an outcry against it, and an opposition not to be endured beyond the termination of a single prorogation of parliament. It is of no use your saying that the poor man (on the thousand-mil system) would receive fifty mils for his shilling, instead of forty-eight farthings; and, in purchasing power, the mil would no doubt be as great as the farthing. You are trying to bribe the poor man with the base temptation of gaining two mils on the shilling. Such a corruption of principle horrifies me. To be sure, the thousand-mil per pound would be all very well, if we only wanted a new system, and were not called upon to deal with, what I glory in, the existing state of things; above

all, with that great national bulwark, popular ignorance and popular prejudice. I prophesy you will have a penny outbreak. With a penny match you will set fire to the wooden framework of society—I mean the assembled blockheads. A penny, sir, notoriously regulates all existing contracts, and the amount of every monetary transaction. London streets may be paved with gold; but, sir, coppers are the keystones of the Royal Exchange, and of every arch in London Bridge, not to mention the tolls over Waterloo ditto."

"And when do you propose the introduction of your victorines and mils?"

"There is not the slightest occasion to hurry. In our grandchildren's time will be soon enough. The great beauty of the project is, that it may be adopted permissively rather than compulsively—in fact, gradually, or not at all, if you like. An act might be passed allowing its optional use, but legalising contracts and accounts kept either according to the existing system or the new one. All large establishments, at least the majority of such,—all government offices (so fond of improvement!), including the Custom-House, the Stamp-Office, and the Post-Office, would probably adopt it at once of their own free-will and fondness for change. Perhaps they wouldn't, and there would be no legal obligation on them to do so. Perhaps some might like to try the new plan, while others would have too much reverence for the good old times to abandon the genuine British coinage. Thus even the prejudices of large numbers of the people would be properly respected, as they ought. In process of time, within another generation, or two, or three,—for all schools and educational establishments more or less would exclusively teach decimals perhaps,—the decimal system (with vulgar fractions for the farthings) would become universal. And, with the exception of the new silver coin (the victorine), value four shillings and twopence (which could never be mistaken for a five-shilling piece in a hurry, or in the dark; it could give rise to no disputes with urbane cabmen and mild omnibus-conductors), no other new coinage would be required for at least a quarter of a century. After the lapse of some such period, the present silver and copper coinage would be considerably worn, and would require to be withdrawn from circulation. Then, and not before, the new issue might be called respectively half and quarter victorines (value 2s. 1d., and 1s. 0½d.), ten-mil pieces (value 5d.), and five-mil pieces (value 2½d.). The two first would be very similar in appearance to the florin and the shilling, and the two latter rather thinner, but having very much the appearance of the present sixpenny and threepenny pieces. The new copper coinage might be of two mils (one penny), the mil (one halfpenny), and the half-mil (one farthing). The present pound would always be the equivalent of four victorines and eighty mils. Discontented people might call that an awkward proportion; but to show how unreasonable is such a complaint, I have only to mention that the five-pound bank-note would just be twenty-four victorines. What do you think of that, sir? You have your decimals, and the penny is saved."

"Confusion worse confounded! Contradiction! Absurdity! Indecision! Delay! If that be all the prisoner Penny has to say for himself, his days are numbered, though his sentence may be deferred. But the indictment is already fully made out. The preamble was published in the *London Gazette* for October 26th, 1855, as follows: 'The Queen has been pleased to direct letters patent to be passed under the great seal, nominating and appointing the Right Honourable Lord Monteagle of Brandon, the Right Honourable Lord Overstone, and John Gellibrand Hubbard, Esquire, to be her Majesty's commissioners for considering how far it may be practicable and advisable to introduce the principle of decimal division into the coinage of the United Kingdom.' If nothing comes of it immediately, something surely will by and by."

"And that's the way in which an old servant is to be treated? Spare me, gentlemen, spare me, on account of my previous good character. Pity the sorrows of a poor old

Penny, whose trembling rim has rolled him to your door, whose life is dwindled to the shortest span. O, give him a reprieve, and Heaven will bless your store (of halfpence and farthings)!"

E. S. DIXON.



THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

I.

WE were travelling a few years since in Cornwall, outside the antiquated vehicle, a four-horse stage-coach, when we suddenly came upon a singular feature in the landscape—a brook flowing with milk, or what seemed to be such. In that land of hills and rocks most of the streams are of an ochreous red colour, opaque and unsightly, owing to their being fed in part with the refuse-water from mines. But at this stage of our journey the brook which foamed and tumbled at the roadside was of the purest white; the mud which lined its banks was white; the very grass and briars that grew within reach of its spray were encrusted with white. We rattled along by the side of this river of milk for a brief space, toiled up a steep hill, and emerged on a wide common, when the mystery was at once solved. We had reached the china-clay works; and the water which had excited our curiosity had been employed in washing one of the materials which contributed largely to the excellence of English pottery. The geological structure of the country is granite; a rock which, though generally exceedingly compact and hard, is liable to be converted into sharp gravel by the decomposition of one of its constituents, feldspar. The result is a white powder or paste, according as it is dry or wet, mixed with crystals of quartz and mica, the other minerals of which granite is constituted. To be available, the former substance has to be separated from the others, which is effected by letting the water run into pits filled with the mixed mass in the state that it is quarried. There the lighter particles are suspended in the fluid and allowed to run off into other pits. After a time the water is drained off; and the sediment is pure feldspar, of the consistence of clay. This, when sufficiently dry, is cut into cubic blocks, and shipped off to the potteries.

But why, it may be asked, is it not manufactured on the spot, and the expense thus saved of conveying it to Staffordshire, and of bringing back the pots and jugs to Cornwall? For two very good reasons, each of which (as is not always the case when two reasons are given) would be a sufficient one: first, because feldspar alone is not convertible into jugs and cups, other ingredients being requisite which are not found in the neighbourhood; and secondly, because potteries consume a vast quantity of fuel, and Cornwall can supply neither coal nor wood. A similar white clay is found in Devonshire; but there a manufacture is established, because the other necessary minerals are within reach, and coal is also found. There exists at Bovey in that county a manufactory which turns out no small quantity of articles in pottery of excellent quality; the necessary fuel being afforded by the stone-coal, or anthracite, found there.

The main seat of the potteries, however, is in Staffordshire; and thither, a few days since, we were whisked in a very different sort of vehicle from the Cornish stage-coach, being deposited by railway at the Stoke station of the North Staffordshire Railway. No granite rocks, heathy commons, or rivers of milk here! Dingy walls, cone-shaped furnaces, and a smoky atmosphere, indicate the centre of a crowded population devoted to some occupation more artistic than

that of raising to the surface the natural products of the earth. Passing through the office, we found ourselves under a portico paved with encaustic tiles; the road, wherever its materials can be discriminated from the black mud which coats it, appears to be composed, here of coal-ashes, there of potsherds; a dirtier place we have never set foot in. But if a good workman is known by his chips, we have here ample evidence that the industry which scatters such chips as these must be gigantic. We proceed towards the town.



NEW FLOWERS.

CALYSTEGIA PUBESCENS.

THIS will soon be one of the most popular flowers for the adornment of verandas, summer-houses, rustic bowers, and garden-screens. It is a bindweed,—in fact, a convolvulus of rich habit and most exquisite form, when considered in detail.

The first plant raised in this country was the produce of a half-dead chip sent in a box from Shanghai to the Horticultural Society by Mr. Fortune in 1844. The root was found inserted in a dead peony-root, and the box was labelled as containing a plant of double convolvulus.

The semi-defunct chip was submitted to the operations commonly used to restore vitality; and the result was, a plant of fine promise, that won favour for itself at once, and is already in the hands of the trade, for the good of every body.

Imagine, in the first place, a common bindweed of the hedges,—one of the noblest of our wildings; then make the leaves smaller and more leathery in texture; make the flower as large as a double anemone; crimp it up irregularly after the fashion of a nearly full-blown rose; paint it of a delicate pink; and you have *Calystegia pubescens* in its individual character. Then imagine a fine breadth of garden-hedge festooned with it from head to foot; or a bowery retreat sheeted with it in rich masses, the slender stems covered with their elegant foliage, and a profusion of flowers creeping into every crevice, and breaking every angular outline with dashed leafiness and soft blotches of colour; and you have, in your mind's eye, the same fine trailer in its landscape or ornamental character.

It is very hardy, grows freely—too freely sometimes—in the worst of soil; but prefers a rich moist loam, like other convolvuluses; it is increased by division of the root, and flowers freely in July and August.

Those who cultivate this *Calystegia* must beware of its fast-spreading roots. If planted any where in the open garden, it will be likely soon to monopolise every square yard of ground, and choke up neighbouring things with its luxuriant growth above ground. For an archway of wire, or a

trellis, in any spot where a delicate climber would not grow, or where some ugly object is to be "planted out," it is very useful; but the cultivator must, in planting it, not forget the tendency of its roots to set all boundaries at defiance. If allowed to run riot in a rough shrubbery, or mix with a tall fence, where its roots cannot reach the general garden soil, it is a fine thing, and worthy of adoption. I cannot speak positively as to its capability for bearing the smoke of towns; but did I need such a climber to screen a town-fence, I should not hesitate to plant it.

Messrs. Henderson, of Wellington-Road Nursery, St. John's Wood, have an improved form of this plant, raised by Mr. Donald Beaton; it is called *Calystegia pubescens simplex*, a chaste French-white single flower, which lasts from June to September. Mr. Beaton says, in the *Cottage Gardener*, it should be grown in masses in by- corners, and allowed to climb over pea-stakes, no matter how rich or how poor the ground is. This variety of Mr. Beaton's will certainly become a popular flower as its merits get more fully known.

SHIRLEY HIBBERD.

FAMILY UNITY.

ONE, perhaps, of the greatest miseries is a lack of unity of feeling and affection in a family, and one also that unfortunately too often prevails. A "lone body," and a looker-on, for nearly threescore years, I have seen much of this unhappiness, almost invariably arising from the most insignificant causes,—a want of forbearance and unselfishness in the every-day course of life,—exactng too much similarity of mind and feeling. It is strange how very little concession we can make to others in unimportant things, if they differ from us. An opinion is passed on the most trifling subject; some one dissents, and then follows an argument, which, as neither will "agree to differ," ends with angry feeling on both sides, simply because we wish to make our own ground good, and exercise no control over our "unruly member," the tongue.

Again, in our intercourse with those around us, we rarely are careful always to maintain that true politeness, which is only another name for a much higher feeling—unselfishness. The sacrifice of perhaps a favourite seat, or a pet habit only, or some such seeming trifle; but which would very often greatly conduce to the comfort of those with whom we associate so intimately. I had the privilege of once knowing well one of those rare beings who found her life in promoting the happiness of those around her. She was perhaps, in the eyes of the world, a quiet unobtrusive person enough; but in her family she was a spirit of light: an atmosphere of peace seemed to pervade when she was by. Was there a sick child to be amused, quieted, she was the one called on. (Children especially acknowledged her influence by their conduct while with her, as children always do intuitively perceive when they meet with one whose habit of mind is higher, purer, than is generally met with.) Was there a piece of disagreeable advice to be given, to her tact it was committed, and it assumed a different aspect. In any little dispute, both parties felt she could settle it without either feeling they had been *worsted*. In any press of occupation, her time was always available when others required it. And so it was in every thing; and I believe the whole secret of her influence over others, and her power of conducing to their comfort, lay in perfect forgetfulness of self, which gave her the power of throwing herself into the very thoughts and feelings of others, while carefully bearing in mind the relative claims each had upon her. Did we all bear in mind that, except when actual duty points another way, the greatest virtue in social life is to conciliate all with whom we come in contact, and consider them in every way before ourselves, we should find life never wanting in that interest of which so many complain; while by this abnegation of self our own daily upward course would be much smoother.



PAINTED BY G. B. O'NEILL.

VILLAGE GOSSIPS.

SPECIMENS OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL: NO. VII.

23 MR 57

VILLAGE GOSSIPS.

By G. B. O'NEILL.

THE old fellow before us is relating some marvellous hap,—appearance of a ghost maybe, “down by Farmer Hodges’ five-field;” or something which has occurred in a far-off country—some tale of Australian or Californian gold-finding; or what “them Rooshians” did in the Crimea. Whatever it be, his auditors have fallen into the interest of the tale with all their hearts. Often has the tale been told by him, we see; for his senses, which age has half-blunted, have overcome the shock of the first news, and he has become critical, telling his story with comments of his own. He is a practised snuff-taker, as his eye shows, and also the form of his nostrils; notice, too, the habitual pinch of the right fore-finger on the thumb, and the way of use with which the left hand holds his box. There is an intelligent look about him; and it is evident that he has seen many a seed-time and harvest, not without profitable reflections thereupon. He is the gaffer of the village.

But if his senses have become blunted, not so the girl’s. Look how she takes in the marvel with eye and mouth! Her action is capital, and her face healthily pretty. She is the future belle of the village perhaps; for we see by her dress that modern customs have not been without their effect upon her.

The dame’s face is good. See how she reprehends something which is in course of telling; and how the form of her hands shows a life of labour, contrasted with those delicate ones of the girl!

The picture has a pretty little frame in itself, of those great leaves of the vine, and the white-flowered alder-bush. The only thing to be regretted in it is, that the old man’s arm is rather too small for his head and his approximation to the spectator; and also we doubt if the action of the girl’s right hand should not be more in unison with that of the left. These hands are so capitally drawn, that this is the greater pity.

The reader will see how important a part the hands play in such a picture, if he hides the faces; when it will be perceived that the action of the hands alone would almost tell the tale.

JOHN PIKE YAPP.

A TALE OF MAYO.

By THE AUTHOR OF “PAUL FERROLL.”

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

THERE is a tract of land in the West of Ireland, comprehending 45,000 acres, which has been bought by an English gentleman. He took to it after the great famine had won the battle over it, and after the battle-field had been cleared of victims, and the very walls which had once sheltered human beings had disappeared.

So complete was the desolation, that in places all trace of habitation was lost. The new owner was once superintending the cutting of a deep drain, which was to prepare the way for the operations of the plough, and for introducing the cultivation of wheat in the west of Mayo. As they cut, the workmen came to a spot where some large stones retarded their operations.

“What is this?” he said. “It is strange to find these stones in the bog.”

“This was father’s cabin,” said a gaunt naked boy, who, with a score more idlers, were gazing on the Englishman’s movements. Those few words went to the English gentleman’s heart; but to the young savage they conveyed nothing more than the fact; for they had all been so used to misery, that misery came naturally to him, and left little space for feeling.

There had been, however, dwellings in the bog, where things were a little better; and among these John Pike

Yapp’s had perhaps been the least wretched. This was owing in part to the small number of his family; for he had but two children. His wife and he were both young and healthy; their boy was beginning to earn money by running on errands, when an opportunity offered itself; the girl was the youngest and the least hearty of the family, and, from the cares she required, was the one who had wound her way deepest into poor Pike’s heart.

He had been employed up to 1848 on his own bit of land, and a job or two in harvest; and although the produce of his labour did but just keep him and his family above starvation, still it had done so, and they had been content. But the beginning of that year had been the beginning of the great woe of Ireland. The partial failure of the potato-crop of 1847 had exhausted all the small reserve of resources the inhabitants possessed; and the doubtful appearance of the actual crop, with the report of disease already apparent in different parts of the island, alarmed the more prudent with the prospect of the winter.

Pike among others took alarm. Many of his neighbours had often gone east in the summer, and returned with the gold of the east to pay their rent, or repair their ragged wardrobe; and Pike, though he had been able to avoid this severe experiment hitherto, came by degrees, in the early summer of 1848, to the conviction that it was the only course remaining for him.

“And when will ye come back, Pike—when will ye come back?” said Honor, his wife, when the last morning was come, and they were up with the light to speed him on his way.

“I’ll be back, my girl, by the blessing of the saints, before ye’ve done grieving for me,” said Pike.

“Ah, Pike, ye must grow an old man or ever I leave grieving,” said Honor; and hiding her face in her hands, she burst into unrestrained tears.

Pike sat down by her, and flung his right arm about her neck. He drew up his children on his knees and kissed them, and twined his hard begrimed fingers in the shining curls—shining, though they were matted and tangled—of the little girl.

“Purty curls!” said he. “May the blessed Mother protect ’em till I come agin! Don’t disremember yer dad, my little ones, and mind ye what yer mammy says; and look out for me one autumn day, and ye’ll see me coming over the hill as ye see me going now. So come, Honor, come past the big stone with me, and there we’ll part.” And hand in hand, silent and with swollen hearts, they left the cottage together, and walked up the steep bank at the bottom of which it was built.

A traveller on horseback was going along the road into which the path emerged. He was Mr. Threader, the English agent for most of the property in the neighbourhood. His attention was caught by the pair who approached, their heads drooping and their hands together: the woman in the dress of the country—the red petticoat and blue cloak; the man with his long coat, patched and mended, his brimless hat, his small bundle, in a once bright-coloured handkerchief. Pike and Honor reached the big stone where they were to part; and here they looked each other in the face, and tears and sobs broke out from either heart, the man and the woman alike breaking down and giving way to nature. Neither spoke, nor was another kiss given; but at last they let each other’s hand fall, and each turned to go on their different way, weeping aloud.

The Englishman was less moved than he would have been by more silent sorrow: this was not the sorrow of his country. Presently he rode up by Pike’s side, and said to him:

“Well, my man, is it like a man to give way thus to your grief?”

“In throth is it,” said Pike; “for it’s being a man makes me feel it.”

“Still it’s women only who shed tears,” said Mr. Threader.

"And what for should not they that's woman-born shed tears, when their natural sorrow comes upon them?" said Pike. "But I've done; I'll go forward now; so good morning to your honour."

"And where are you going?" said the traveller.

"To the east, to win bread."

"What do you expect to earn by the time you come back?"

"Arrah, I'll be discontinued under three guineys," said Pike.

"How easy it would be to give him three guineas, and let him stay with his wife and children!" thought Mr. Threader; but he did not do it. Instead, he pulled out the substitute for most of our painstaking and most of our charity,—half-a-crown namely,—and made a present of it to Pike.

"The blessing of Heaven be upon you!" cried Pike, astonished and delighted. "Ten times twenty thousand blessings be upon ye! It's good loock, besides three tinnies. I'll take it to the woman." And turning, he ran down the hill as quickly now as he had come up it slowly, and rushed into his own cottage once more, which he had not thought to see for so long. Honor was raking together the turves on the fire, weeping still; the boy was watching his mother very gravely; the little girl was on the ground, setting up a broken teacup.

"Here's a Godsend!" cried Pike; "here's enough to buy oatmeal these three weeks. And here's another kiss, my woman; and God bless the purty ones! A gentleman give it me, and give me a light heart too. It's loock!"

"And I've seen ye agin too," said the woman. "O, ye'll come back now; I feel ye'll come back!"

"And good by agin, Honor. That run has done us both good," said Pike; and away he shot with an easier heart.

Mr. Threader's half-crown had been well laid out in the purchase of light-heartedness for a fellow-creature.

The summer wore away, and Pike prospered. He did not find it necessary to cross the seas, but got enough to do in Dublin and the neighbourhood; and by the time harvest was housed, had accumulated the sum he had fixed upon. He had heard no news from home, nor had he sent any; the natural thing was, that all should go on as if he had been at home, and vain fears did not torment him. Honor, who was safe at home, was more troubled for her wandering husband than he for her; for she knew not where to look for him, nor in the perils of the way what might befall him. Still she believed for the most part in the natural course of events, and took patience to wait till they should unfold themselves at their own leisure. Thus, when October was half over, she began to expect him every day; and it was no surprise, though it was great joy, when one evening the latch was hastily lifted, and Pike himself cheerily burst into the room.

"Honor, how is't all with yer? I'm here, my girl, agin at long last; and where's the little ones? All right—all right; yes, here's kisses for all, and long life to us!"

"Why, then, 'tis you that are welcome entirely," cried Honor; "and no more throuble at home, at all at all, now the man's in it agin."

"And I bring the guineys too," said Pike, carefully drawing his old handkerchief from his bosom, and showing her the three golden sovereigns.

"Ah, indeed!" said Honor; "but the master's proctor has been here after the rint, and that will take the biggest part, honey."

"Sure it will," said Pike; "but it'll save the phaties."

"Pike, Pike, haven't ye seen all along the country they're gone every where?"

"Nay, I see two or three patches as green as never they were; and I thought all along ours was to be one of them."

"Scarce a root here in Castle-Anton," said Honor; "not a blessed root."

"But, woman, what's the heap at the door? sure I see a covered-up heap as I come over."

"Ah, Pike, it's just a few not so bad as the others; but last year we would not have given them the pig."

"Well," said Pike cheerily, "we have never a pig this year to give 'em to."

"But my cousin Johnny died, by lave of the Virgin herself," said Honor, "and left me yonder milk-pitcher. See if she shan't have the best corner and the best cover, the blessed cratur." And she led her husband to the side of the few smouldering turves; and there (lifting a very old bit of sacking) showed him a goat, whose swelling udder justified the fond title, of milk-pitcher, which she had given it.

"Blessed Saint Anthony!" cried Pike. "Is not she better than the Dublin Savings Bank? And the childer themselves can put in their gatherings of grass, and draw out preciouser than money from her blessed teats."

"Ay, but it's very little support with scarce no food besides," said Honor gravely.

"Well, but have not I brought you a present as was made me by a gentleman's house that saw me walking past. Here's crusties for all, and some for to-morrow," said the hopeful Pike, emptying his pocket of broken bread, which he had hoarded since yesterday for this home-feast.

Both parents were well aware of the extreme difficulties which threatened them through the approaching winter; and they managed the little store they had like sailors, leagues from land, who have to spin out the resources to which there can be no addition till the long waste of ocean is past. They ate the worst of their small stock of potatoes, and every day turned and wiped the others, renewed the earth over them, and chose out for their meal those which decayed. They determined to send their goat to a distance along the bog, where it might find fresher pasture; and every day Pike himself, or the little boy, if his father could find any better employment for himself, fastened a string, knotted together out of numberless pieces, to the animal's neck, and patiently attended on its nibblings. They laid out a very small portion of Pike's earnings in oatmeal, and this they kept in a jar with a stone on the top, which stone was thoughtfully lifted and parsimoniously replaced. More than all his money was due to the landlord; but these were not times when landlord or tenant could contemplate the payments proposed when things went prosperously. Payment of some kind, however, must be made. Accordingly, one fine autumn day, Pike drew from his hoard of money four-fifths of his whole substance, and wended his way five Irish miles to put it into the hands of his landlord. The landlord had, indeed, no hands of his own; he had tied the cords of debt fast about himself, and was a mere lay figure between his income and his creditors. As such he kindly received his numberless tenantry, and as far as a good word would go had one for every body.

It was chiefly such tenants as had any property which could be seized, should they not pay, who came to bring their money to O'Toole. No doubt Pike had had his own thoughts of the turf-heap and the goat, the cabin and the garden where potatoes used to grow, which he should have perilled had he not produced his earnings; at all events, there he was, fumbling with the bit of rag that folded them up, and slowly counting to himself, as if it were unnatural to finish in a moment a matter which, to him at least, was so important.

"I hear you've been from home," said O'Toole; "but not across seas, hey Pike?"

"No, your honour; only far enough to fetch these many shillings for your honour. There's forty-two of them and one groat. Will it be enough?"

"We'll put them to your credit," said the agent, booking and bagging the coin. "There'll be ten still to pay some day."

"Or maybe ye'll get excused," said O'Toole in a low voice; "times are hard on us all, and I've me payments to make as ye have," he continued, "else perhaps I could do more than good wishes for me people."

"Long life to your honour for that same," said Pike, folding up the empty rag and replacing it in his pocket.

"But I'll tell ye something," said O'Toole, "that's better than any thing I could do for you. England's ashamed of herself, wallowing in luxury while poor Ireland's starving, and has been stirred by her conscience to send us over a few of her loose guineas. I'll tell you what it is, Pike, there'll be no starving, if indeed you're not better off than before; for if all's fairly divided that's coming, there'll be a raal ten-shilling piece for every man, woman, and child in Ireland."

"Salvation to me!" cried Pike in astonishment. "Then it's myself wishes I had a dozen childer! Why, I'd get a dozen illegant ten shillings, and that's six pounds, among us four,—Honor and little Honor, and Johnny the spalpeen, and me!"

O'Toole laughed at Pike's calculation on his imaginary twelve, who were to feed his real four, and told it as a brave bull in as many companies as he went into for a month to come. But the impression on Pike was more serious. He went home in the state of mind of a man whose most confirmed and habitual opinions have been overthrown by some undoubted authority, but he does not understand the reasons.

"Honor," he said, "here's great news indeed. We have not need to fear any longer; for there's a terrible good lady been a-looking after us."

"Then God bless her sweet face, and give her back her own and three halves!" said Honor. "And who shall she be, honey?"

"The lady with the pitchfork in her hand, and the deep bonnet on her head, and the big pan she holds fast to sit upon, and her clothes so thin you'll see her skin through," said Pike, who had been deeply studying and admiring Britannia on his groat as he went that morning to O'Toole's.

"Hut, Pike; who are you maning?" said Honor.

"Who could I mane but England her ownself?" answered her husband.

"Ah, what jeer has the master been putting upon you?" said Honor. "I fear you had a taste of his drink after the rint."

"If I but had!" said Pike. "But no such luck for tinnepenny tenants like me, girl. No, no; it's all thrue. England has been sending over more gowd than goes in forty ships; and we're all to get a piece of it in place of phaties."

"O, blessed mother, what a stone off one's heart!" said Honor; "for I've been afraid days past to look on the phatie-heap and think of the winter."

"That's been the way with me too," said Pike; "but I said nothing till now. And now, girl, my opinion is, 'twere best to eat away while the creeturs are good at all at all, and then go in and get the bounty they have for us."

"Besides," said Honor, "the less we have the more they'll give, I'm thinking. Maybe, if we said we had kept a store, they'd answer, Then you don't need."

"That's as like as not," said Pike, struck with his wife's foresight. And accordingly they took the stone off the jar of oatmeal, and dived among the potatoes for the best of them, and for some time eat fearlessly, and rejoiced to see the little ones stout and cheery again.

This temporary and comparative plenty existed more or less all over the neighbourhood, as the news spread of the expected bounty. It was, however, but a very short-lived gleam of comfort; for the unusually scanty resources of the country were soon exhausted when thus called upon.

"Neighbour Pike," said a voice at the door one day, when they sat about nearly the last bowl of potatoes they could collect out of the decaying roots, "I'm called on you to see can you spare half a phatie; I've not eaten too long—all out;" and the man who thus spoke staggered into the room, eagerly staring at the food which was on the bench.

"Take your share," said Pike, handing him the bowl; "but fairly, man," he added; for his hands seemed about to grasp all they could hold of the slender meal.

"O, if ye knew what it was to burn here as I do for want of natural food!" said the man.

"And don't I; and don't we all in our turn?" said Pike.

"And what's to be coming of us I can't see; for the bounty of England is long reaching us."

"Some have had it, but not me," said Lewis.

"I thought ye war above wanting it," said Pike; "ye had yer males always convanient at Miss Tredabor, when I went east."

"Ay, but there was a loss of grain there," said Lewis; "a sack or so out of her hundreds of sacks; and they went and proved it on me, though I was as far from taking it as you may yourself suppose, Pike; and I've lost my males ever since entirely."

Pike shook his head. "Arrah, Lewis, I did not think you'd fall into the ould way agin. But take ye food now; I don't believe we shall have it to take or give by and by."

"And milk ye have!" said Lewis. "How came you by milk, yer sowl?"

"There's a little left in the creetur," said Pike, pointing to his goat, which was tethered behind the cabin.

"Troth, if she was mine," cried Lewis, "I'd eat roast this day."

"Keep yer hands off her," said Pike; "she's our salvation. I'll look to her like the youngest child, or I'll know the reason why any body casts his eye on her."

It was not unadvisedly that Pike spoke; for the eyes of the starving man coveted the goat; and when he was gone, Pike observed to his wife, that if any harm happened to her he should know whom to accuse. Nor was it long before he found he had some reason for his fears.

Shortly after, the famine, which had been hanging over the country, descended with all its blighting influence; and the small stock of provisions being exhausted, the inhabitants rapidly fell into the fangs of the torment. They searched the earth for one decayed fibre of the once friendly potatoe; they travelled for miles to buy half a peck of oatmeal a halfpenny cheaper in one place than another; they tore off the bark of trees; they dug up the roots of grass; they turned their languishing eyes to the promised help from England; and crowds beset the doors where those appointed to the office divided as well as they could whatever stores reached them. It was quite impossible to give to all, and nearly so to give in the proportion of need. Cousins and kinsmen came in for Benjamin's share, and those who showed misery most got more than those who bore it best.

Pike saw Lewis among the foremost; and when Lewis's bag was filled, pushed forward himself, knowing that his own claim was at least equal. But he spoke the truth in saying that he had only two children, and that he had earned money in the harvest; and as they were compelled to refuse many applicants, they refused Pike, at least for the present. His visions had been of four ten-shilling pieces—unreasonable visions; but his betters it was, who had raised them; and when they vanished, and not even one meal of food took their place, the poor fellow's heart sank within him. Could he return and carry nothing home? Impossible; and he took a circuit of ten miles to pass by his landlord's house, where he had first heard those tidings which had so deceived him. He did not need to go quite so far; for as he crossed the moor which lay all round O'Toole's demesne, he espied on the side of the hill, where the heather conquered the bog, the master himself, gun in hand, striding along, with the usual attendance of ragged boys.

"Good loock to yer honour," said Pike; "and better loock than's with me the day."

"Ha! it's you, Pike," said O'Toole. "Well, and I am glad to see you. Is all well with you?"

"All's can't be worsen," said Pike, "save seeing yer honour in health."

"And how's that? though indeed, except health, I won't say there is a great prosperity in my own concerns."

"Ah, yer honour has no needcessity to depend on them ten-shilling pieces as ye promised me."

"What, don't ye get them?" said O'Toole. "How's that, I'd be glad to know?"

"Jist because there are none to have," said Pike.

"Then I've been misinformed," said O'Toole; "and that's treatment I don't understand."

"Meantime, if yer honour had but an errand to run," said Pike more doubtfully, "or a broken vittle—the childer at home is well-nigh out-hungred."

"And, by Jove, ye should have it, had I it," cried O'Toole enthusiastically; "but am I not here,—I'll tell you the simple truth, Pike,—trying for a bird, because there's gentlemen coming to dine with me; and save the salmon, which is out of season and can't be had, and the grouse, which I have not got yet, and the claret that remains in the cellar, I've just an empty larder for them."

"O, yer honour is pleasant," said Pike; "but ye would think seriouser if ye saw the childer at home."

"I could not think more, nor graver than I am thinking, if it was my own," said O'Toole. "But see, Pike, this I'll do: I put these pence, out of the back of the drawer, into my pocket this morning; and they are yours. I do believe they may be a few of your very own at rent-day; for some were put by for my private use. And here again, here's bread-cake, which stayed after breakfast on the table, and I took it up and thought I or some of the boys would like it. Take it, Pike, and good may it do you;" and O'Toole, with generosity that warmed his own heart, emptied his pocket, and put into Pike's ragged garment a little heap of the brown cake.

"Then the blessing of the Lord be upon you!" said Pike, "and give ye half every thing to the day of judgment. I'll go home with an easy heart now that I dare face their hungry crying this night. Long life to yer honour, and give ye yer heart's desire on the birds for dinner;" and well satisfied with his day's work, he descended the hill, and in the village he went through laid out his few pence in the shop, and made his way home as fast as his faint limbs would let him.

When he was within half a mile of his cabin, he saw before him on the moor a boy, whom he recognised as his own, very slowly leading the goat, which he suffered to stop every moment to crop the bog-herbs and grass. The boy, he soon perceived, was crying bitterly; and when he called to him, sat down by the wayside and sobbed as if his heart would break. In vain the father for some time inquired what had befallen. At last the lad, waxing more and more loud as he came near to the necessity of explaining his woe, pointed to the udder of the goat and, scarcely audible, said, "She's milkit."

"Murder!" cried Pike. "Who's done it?" and stooping, he verified the too true word by examining the only storehouse of life that remained to them—the udder of the animal. "That blackguard, Lewis," he added directly. "Stop yer roaring, Johnny, you young bull-calf, and tell me."

"The man that put his hand so far in the phaties," sobbed Johnny.

"And this is his thanks!" cried Pike. "How long ago? Which way did he go?"

"Before sundown," said Johnny; and it was now waxing dusk.

"Which way, I say?" cried the father, greatly excited.

"Home," said Johnny, pointing behind to a cabin just visible above the bog.

Pike said no more, but darted away to the place pointed out. The door was ajar; it could not be shut close. Lewis was within, sitting on the floor, his back against the wall, a child crawling over him, and seeming to kiss him; but the hapless wretch was gathering the remains of food from his shaggy bristly beard. Two more had got an iron-pot between them, scraping it for remnants which no longer existed. A ragged woman stood in the bare cabin weeping. There were few cabins then that did not contain that dismal sight—a woman weeping; but *her* tears were bitterer than most.

"Ye thief!" said Pike, bursting in; "where's the milk ye've stole from me this day—my childer's milk?"

"And what will I know of yer milk?" said Lewis, stumbling to his legs.

"It's just in yer throat; it's on yer beard still," said the angry Pike; "ye've made a meal of my childer, and I believe ye've not even fed yer own."

"And that's truth," said the weeping wife. "The brute,—was not he *there*, a-standing *there*, this minute past, with his one hand in the dish and the other a-fighting us away; fighting even the little one, that was made worse, seeing and not tasting the food."

"Ye base, ye cruel!" cried Pike, scarce comprehending what he heard.

Lewis at this time was in a state of satisfied hunger; human feelings could get in, the wolf's being appeased. He tried at first to bully; and then, every thing convicting him, gave in and burst into tears. "I could not help it, Pike," he said; "it's harder for me than other men to starve; there's that here when I starve that nobody feels but me. But I am sorry now."

"And don't we all starve?" cried the indignant Pike. "Is it since yesterday morning I've not had the blessed bit in my mouth?"

"Noa, Pike," cried Lewis; "and what's that in yer bag?"

"Is it not the childer's and the woman's own, that should have been a meal with the drop milk that's in yer greedy paunch, and would I touch it?"

"Ah, yer sowl," cried Lewis, drawing near, and folding his hands as if he were praying, "give a bit jist to this famishing child!"

"And ye dare!" cried Pike, astonished at the boldness of the request; "ye—ye that are full of my meat, and would have the robbed man feed yer own. No, by the powers, if they all starve dead before the eyes of us!"

"It wasn't I drank the milk, neighbour," said the wife; "'twasn't the little ones,—one crumb for the childer."

"Ask your husband," cried Pike. "Didn't I hand him the bowl when he was hungry? didn't I tell him the ones-at-home's life was in the goat's teats? wouldn't I have shared with him the bit of my own share?—the thief! And he and his comes thinking I shall just feed 'em for robbing me. Be aisy, ma'am, be aisy." And so saying, indignantly did he fling out of the cabin, pushing back the children who clung about his legs, and who wailed and wept with weak voices as they ran after him, holding their arms up to shield their heads from the thrusts he made at them.

Pike's kind heart bled to hear those weak wailing voices. Even as he ran, his fingers fumbled in the bundle and broke a piece of the coarse bread. "Then it's jist eating the less myself," said he, breaking it into four, and giving each a bit; and turning again, he ran all the way home, overtaking his sobbing boy and the goat, and bringing, together with the bad news of her robbery, the good news of food to stop the direct present starvation.

BOOKS AND MEN.

THERE are, in the realms of literature and thought, as in the more material world, byways as well as highways. Besides the great works in poetry, philosophy, history, and science, there are many lesser productions which deal nevertheless with topics of no little significance; and others which, though in peril of neglect and oblivion, are, in their small way, not unimportant, and supply indications of approaching discoveries destined at a future time to be regarded as of considerable value. The multitude of books, of which we all wish to know something, consists of such tentative efforts: the higher creations of the intellect are necessarily the few. Out of the mass, we may occasionally make a selection, on which some passing remarks, conceived in a right spirit and applied in a proper manner, may not be altogether unprofitable.

A curious state of feeling has arisen in some thoughtful

minds, both in America and England, in relation to SHAKSPERE, owing to the exceedingly doubtful character of the documents usually relied on for testimony as to the supposed events of his life. It must be confessed that we can scarcely touch one of them, as proof of a fact, without its becoming on the slightest inquiry transmuted into a myth. An instance of the sort occurred lately in our own experience. There is a passage in Fuller's *Worthies*, which is relied upon by Shakspeare's biographers for contemporary evidence of the poet's conversational powers, as discriminated from Ben Jonson's. Here it is: "Many were the wit-combates between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. I behold them like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances; Shakspeare, like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." Who would suspect that this celebrated passage was written by a man who was only eight years old when the poet died? Yet such is the fact. Its value, therefore, is only traditional, and not personal. It is a fancy portrait of the two dramatists, derived, not from actual intercourse, but probably from the perusal of their writings; not a record of what their conversational "wit-combates" really were, but what, from a critical estimate of their works, they might be imagined to be. With such examples of the tricks to which the inquirer is liable from acknowledged authorities, no wonder that scepticism should in some minds take an extreme form. The latest is, that Shakspeare is not at all the author of the works that pass under his name; but that they may with greater probability be referred to Lord Bacon. This is the theory propounded by Mr. William Henry Smith in a printed letter to Lord Ellesmere, and since advocated by him in more than one lecture delivered at the Beethoven Rooms and other places. Of course his argument is mainly negative, tending to make out a *prima facie* case for inquiry, rather than supplying data for a demonstration; and, indeed, it would be absurd to attribute any larger value to the argument than to show how curiously circumstances will range themselves about a startling theory when once propounded. According to Mr. Smith's statement, we have no reliable sources of information as to Shakspeare's boyhood,—no suggestion of any precocity of talent, any adequate schooling, whether in circumstances or tuition, or any manifestation of superior attainments at any period of his life. Taking Shakspeare's antecedents, the production of the plays under his name by him would be simply miraculous; while taking Bacon's antecedents, it would be no marvel at all. Mr. Smith adopts Pope's notion, that what occasioned the "plays to be considered Shakspeare's was only this,—they were pieces by unknown authors, or fitted up for the theatre while it was under his administration; and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him." That this was the case with *some* of the plays is generally acknowledged; Mr. Smith asserts it of *all*. William Shakspeare, then, in this gentleman's opinion, was the man of business of the theatre, who had to provide the wardrobe, properties, and plays, and exhibited in the purchase of any or all of these matters much shrewdness, skill, caution, and sagacity. As to the authorship of plays in general, "the chambers of the briefless barrister have ever been the hotbed of dramatic productions." In Lord Bacon, we find a man who had been unexpectedly driven to the study of the law as a *métier* of subsistence, with scanty means whereon to support luxurious habits, and who would naturally add to them by pursuits so usual with persons similarly situated. Proof exists that Bacon had great dramatic talent. It is recorded that "he could assume the most different characters, and speak the language proper to each, with a facility that was perfectly natural," and that he both "wrote and assisted at masques." In a letter to the lord treasurer, Bacon expresses his regret that "a joint masque of the four inns of court," which had been intended, could

not be performed; and informs him that there are "a dozen gentlemen of Grey's Inn ready by themselves to offer an entertainment to the queen." We are also informed that, in a masque acted before the queen, at Greenwich, in February 1587, the "dumbe showes" were "partely devised by Maister Frauncis Bacon."

It would be between the years 1579 and 1611 that Mr. Smith supposes that Bacon was thus occupied with dramatic production, while he was studying for the bar at Gray's Inn, and was on terms of intimacy with Lord Southampton, the avowed patron of Shakspeare. That he was during this period in that state which induces men to adopt almost any means of raising money, is attested by this fact, among others, that he was arrested in 1598 by one Symson, a goldsmith of Lombard Street, for the large sum of 300*l*. And, in conclusion, "surrounded by enemies ready to represent him upon all occasions to the greatest possible disadvantage, we can readily conceive that he felt the necessity of keeping his connection with the players unknown to be hardly less urgent than the necessity which compelled him to resort to them."

In his lectures on this subject, Mr. Smith calls in the testimonies of Coleridge, Macaulay, and Pope, to prove the identity of the faculties exerted by Bacon and Shakspeare in their various writings, and particularly in regard to the remarkable strain of humour displayed by both. An examination of the text, too, shows some singular resemblances,—frequently the same allusions, indicating the same course of reading, and the same errors of reference and citation. Without, therefore, supposing for a moment that it will at length be proved that Bacon has any right whatever to these immortal dramas, we may conclude that the inquiry set on foot, and the collation instituted between the texts of the works of the sage and the bard, may result in some curious coincidences, and lead to very suggestive inferences. One thing must be granted, that justice has not yet been rendered to Bacon's poetic talents, and that the verses which are extant in his name have far more merit than is generally supposed. There are verses, too, of Shakspeare, which Mr. Smith himself has undervalued,—the sonnets and poems of Shakspeare, which prove Shakspeare's capacity as a poet, and, in Coleridge's opinion, manifest all the powers afterwards more fully developed in the dramas. *Venus and Adonis* was published in 1593, *Lucrece* in 1594; and Francis Meres, a writer of the time, mentioned, in 1598, Shakspeare's "sugered sonnets amongst his private friends." It seems to us, therefore, that Mr. Smith's first inquiry should be to account for Shakspeare's power to produce these. The same man who wrote the poems evidently *might* write the plays: the critic's wonder is accordingly misplaced.

A work has been lately published calculated to throw some light on our Elizabethan literature, and which may rightfully be mentioned in connection with this subject. We allude to the collection of Sir Thomas Overbury's *Miscellaneous Works*, edited by E. F. Rimbault, LL.D.; an author most famous in his day, and since unjustly neglected. His poems, *The Wife* and *The Remedy of Love*, are replete with every excellence: they have imagination as well as wit; the learning of the schools, and the knowledge of the world, are combined in these compositions. Of his prose works, that entitled *Characters* is the most meritorious. Here are indeed shown graphic power and skill in word-colouring seldom reached. Both Shakspeare and Ben Jonson were indebted to Overbury's works; and the latter bore express testimony to him in verse and prose. No such record proceeds from Shakspeare in relation to any contemporary. It certainly is extraordinary that Shakspeare has not left a single commendatory line concerning his fellow-workers, in an age in which commendatory poems abounded.

In dealing with a forgotten poet of a past age, let us not forget a minor poet of the present, whose merits are considerable. There is many a lover of elegant verse who will be pleased to learn that another volume has proceeded from

the pen of Mr. W. C. Bennett. It is entitled *Queen Eleanor's Vengeance, and other Poems*. Among these, there are strains that bring Tennyson and Browning to mind, without abating our respect for the immediate author. The ballad which initiates the collection is written in stanza-couplets, and shows a power in dealing with the elements of the terrible perhaps not suspected by the author's admirers. On the fair Rosamond he dwells but little; the vindictive feelings of the jealous Eleanor are those that have plainly fascinated the poet's genius. A dramatic poem, entitled "A Character," manifests the same tendency. The creole, Lina Merton, is a Queen Eleanor on a small scale, and of a more metaphysical turn of mind; but her vengeance is equally cruel, or rather more so. The queen only murders, but the creole annihilates. The piece, however, most to our mind is "The Boat-Race." The "New Griselda," which is evidently the writer's favourite, has less of pure beauty, and the conventions introduced disturb the ideal impressions. Mr. Bennett's classic imitations are, as usual, excellent. Theocritus writes again in such pieces as "Pygmalion," "Ariadne," and "The Judgment of Midas." The political pieces are vigorous, satirical, and fully justify the reputation already acquired by the author for compositions of the kind. But it is in his domestic moods that we best love to encounter Mr. Bennett. Is not the following exquisite?

"BABY'S SHOES.

O THOSE little, those little blue shoes!
Those shoes that no little feet use.
O the price were high
That those shoes would buy,
Those little blue unused shoes!
For they hold the small shape of feet
That no more their mother's eyes meet,
That, by God's good will,
Years since grew still,
And ceased from their totter so sweet.
And O, since that baby slept,
So hushed, how the mother has kept,
With a tearful pleasure,
That little dear treasure,
And o'er them thought and wept!
For they mind her for evermore
Of a patter along the floor;
And blue eyes she sees
Look up from her knees
With the look that in life they wore.
As they lie before her there,
There babbles from chair to chair
A little sweet face
That's a gleam in the place,
With its little gold curls of hair.
Then O wonder not that her heart
From all else would rather part
Than those tiny blue shoes
That no little feet use,
And whose sight makes such fond tears start!"

No doubt the hypercritical will discern faults in the above; but the true natural feeling manifested will atone for all trifling defects. Among the more ambitious efforts, we may note with especial commendation the poems entitled "Columbus" and "The Star of the Ballet." The last is a ballad in which simplicity, thought, and sentiment wrestle for the victory, and lovingly unite, as it were, in a war-embrace. The most remarkable poetic phase of the times is truly that of our minor minstrelsy.

The National Magazine.

[The Editors of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE cannot return unavailable Papers, except in cases where it may seem desirable to communicate with the writers.]

Mrs. NORTON has made many powerful appeals through the press in behalf of the rights of mothers to have the care of

their own children. But this is only half of the argument, and goes upon the assumption that all mothers are good and careful trainers of children. The following plain narrative shows another side of the question.

A wealthy man in the sister kingdom, in the first-class social position, was married to a lady of corresponding position, and had a family of four children, three boys and a girl. The father was a *bon vivant*, who kept horses and dogs and claret, frequented the turf and gaming-table; and after being "nobody's enemy but his own," died of *delirium tremens*; and his wife soon followed him to the grave, leaving the children utterly destitute. Relatives "well-to-do" abandoned them; and refused to bestow upon them even the means of showing their destitution in the commonest conventionalities of outward garb. They were thrust forth as pariahs upon the world.

But the eldest boy, scarce sixteen years of age, had the heart of a hero. A tradesman of his father's gave him some coarse mechanical employment at a few shillings a-week; and then seeking a poor lodging in an outskirt of the town, he became the father and protector of his brothers and sister; feeding on potatoes, but exulting in the thought that those he loved were kept away from the dregs of vice. Horror-struck at his father's end, he took the temperance pledge, and religiously kept it.

Grown to man's estate, after privations that none but the heroic nature can undergo without debasement, he made his way to England, and obtained good wages. All the luxury he then indulged in was changing his diet of potatoes for a diet of dry bread. Every farthing of his wages beyond this and lodging was devoted to the task of sending out his brothers and sister to establish them in the United States. This heavy task accomplished, he married a delicately-nerved woman, of nature as heroic as his own, and power of self-sacrifice that was a marvel. Goodly children were born to them; he rose in position from a workman to a foreman, with the confidence of his employers; and all would have been well, but that one of the brothers in America had married a dawdling worthless wife, and become a drag on his resources. His incessant help was unavailing. His sister came home to him; and one after the other his brothers died.

Meanwhile hosts of relatives poured in upon him in his prosperity. They who had shirked him as a poor boy were now not ashamed to borrow his money, and quarter their families on him, till human nature could bear no more; and the delicate nerves of the wife, roused to action, forbade with resolute will all further encroachment. Letters came from America, asking for more assistance to enable the widow of the deceased brother to carry on his business. A consultation was held, and husband and wife resolved to send for the widow and her four children, to bring them home to live with them, treating her, a stranger to them, as a sister, and her children as their children. The money was sent out to pay their debts and their passage home.

They came: a girl of ten, two boys of four and five, and another boy a year old. Nothing could be kinder, more genial, than their reception. The mother was placed in the position of sister, and the children put upon an equality with their cousins. Soon came out the truth, that all the children were afraid of her, that the daughter had been made her drudge and slave, and the other children victims of her tyranny; that the death of her husband had been a consequence of her selfish misconduct, if not worse. The children, browbeaten into fear, were all liars from terror, and frightened at her. She would do no kind of work, give no help, even to the care of her own children. All she cared for was, to eat and drink, and complain of want of society, and denial of places of amusement. At home she preferred the kitchen to the parlour.

At length she told her brother-in-law, that if he would take all the children on himself, and give her a specified sum of money, she would go to her relations in Ireland, and trouble him no more. She went; and the children were



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. FROM A MEDALLION BY MARSHALL WOOD.

sent to school, and were gradually trained to better habits. The youngest child remained at home, and became a favourite.

Six months elapsed, during which the worthless woman had spent the money, and tired out all her relatives. She then came back, and wanted again to be taken in; but this was sternly refused. Then she tried to exact black-mail, as a compensation for leaving her own children to be maintained. Failing in this, she laid down at the door for the whole day, howling like a wild-cat, to get the commiseration of the neighbours on account of her "cruel separation from her dear children." Then she set up a life of mendicancy in the neighbourhood, making her occasional appearance whenever the children were at home, and scaring them out of their senses. At length, on promise of better behaviour, she was allowed to come to the door and see them from time to time. It almost required force to get the children to her; and her practice was to threaten them, that when they grew up she would shame them all. One day she called, and the servant set the youngest child down at the door while she went to fetch the others, who had run away to hide themselves from such a mother. During the servant's absence, she carried off the child, to use as a means of better obtaining charity.

And so, as the plea of maternity is in all cases to give a right to the care of children, this unfortunate child is to

be brought up in a condition of hopeless misery. The heroic self-sacrificing nature of the husband and his wife is simply martyred by the malicious will of a demon in woman's form. The question, therefore, is, not one of woman's right to her children, or man's right to his children, but the right of the children themselves to such training as may raise them to be useful members of the community, and not mere pests to society.

And the wretched woman herself thinks she is ill-used. She tells every one that her father kept his carriage, and that it is the duty of her relatives to see that she is comfortably maintained, without being degraded by working. To her own mind, she realises a series of iniquities practised on her, and is very desirous to have possession of her daughter, that she may work for her, while she lives in idleness. She can only see justice from the side of her own comfort.

She too has been injured in being badly brought up. Her lazy and worthless nature might have been turned in early youth, not to love justice, but to recognise necessity, and bow down to it, instead of uselessly struggling to plunder the industrious. Meanwhile there is a clear case of an unscrupulous wild-beast in woman's form passing her time to compass the misery of a generous and self-sacrificing household, in order to extort black-mail, with more calculating wilful cruelty than a garrotter. And probably when

she has thoroughly destroyed the child by the inculcation of vile practices, she will some day leave him at the door of his uncle—when she can no longer extract a profit from him—a poisoned thing, to inflict still greater pain on those whose affection will forbid them to abandon him.

In the eyes of the law, the uncle would be justified in sending the whole family to the workhouse; and the humanity and affection of his nature is made an instrument of torture to him.

When will the law provide a remedy for the wrongs done by, as well as against, mothers as well as fathers; and give to the children a chance of being well cultivated, as a counteraction to being badly born?



AURORA LEIGH.*

THE progress of Mrs. Browning's mind, from her earliest poems to the present, is an interesting study for the poetic observer. After the plaintive human tenderness of her first lays, now little known, we had the spiritual aspiration revealed in the "Seraphim;" then the strife between human love with its mortal crosses, and faith with its immortal crown, which formed the frequent burden of her two volumes in 1844; then the sympathy evinced in "Casa Guidi Windows" with the present condition of Italy,—a poem proving the writer's sense of the uses and responsibilities of her power; and finally, the present volume, *Aurora Leigh*, in which a direct and practical interest in the world of to-day is yet more evident.

Mrs. Browning has lost something since she began to write; but she has gained more. There is less tenderness, less of the touching music drawn from grief, less of those qualities that come home to the individual; but there is more strength, a yet nobler aim, a profounder insight, a deeper sympathy with universal man. There are times now when Mrs. Browning becomes sarcastic and denunciatory. Her genius has laid aside the lute that whispered of life's sorrows, and done battle with its ways. Its mien is at once sterner and loftier; less winning to the many, but with a grander expression, enhanced, as it were, by the scars of conflict.

Aurora Leigh is a poetess. She is so, not by any formal choice or mere mental aptitude, but by nature. Her genius is the growth of her being, the necessary efflorescence of such a root. Given the quick instincts of right, the warm impulses, and the ideal yearnings that are blended in this woman's heart, you have as its inevitable result such a creation as an *Aurora Leigh*. Such a woman will pierce to the core of things, despise all false semblances, aspire to an unattainable perfection, and turn at first with a sad scorn, not only from the counterfeits of worth, but from its true exemplars, if they move on the humble level of mere utilities, and propose by their benevolence to ameliorate man's outward condition only. Her cousin, Romney Leigh, embodies this latter type of character. He is a philanthropist who would rescue the victims of poverty and crime chiefly by an improvement of their circumstances, and who is apt, in what are called practical reforms, to condemn the influences of imagination and feeling, and the solemn realities of man's inner life, to which they point.

Spiritual agency and material agency are symbolised in these two persons; and their union in the sequel signifies the fusion of the principles which they represent. The aspiring and scornful idealist finds the noblest use of her gifts in their practical application. The material worker learns that man's social progress is blindly aimed at unless pursued in the light of his immortality; and, better than all,

* *Aurora Leigh*. By ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. London: Chapman and Hall.

both acknowledge that in every true worker there must be that which is lovelier than any glimpse of imagination, directer in its blessings than the most practical deed,—the surrender of the doer in soul and act to the Source of all good, a will that seeks but to reflect His, and leaves results with Him who, through all intermediates, is the One Cause. Says *Aurora* to Romney, referring to a long-past conversation:

" 'We both were wrong that June day,—both as wrong
As an east wind had been. I who talked of art,
And you who grieved for all men's griefs . . . what then?
We surely made too small a part for God
In these things. What we are, imports us more
Than what we eat; and life, you've granted me,
Develops from within. But innermost
Of the inmost, most interior of the interne,
God claims his own, Divine humanity
Renewing nature,—or the piercingest verse,
Prest in by subtlest poet, still must keep
As much upon the outside of a man
As the very bowl in which he dips his beard.' "

Interwoven with the story of *Aurora Leigh* and her cousin Romney is that of Marian Erle; and there are passages in it which will startle and probably repel the reader. In selecting an image of almost saintly purity from surroundings of misery and sin, Mrs. Browning has so far exercised a choice which cannot, we think, be fairly impeached. Such cases are exceptional; but an exception, no less than a rule, is a fact, and may claim its place as a true contribution to our experience. Moreover, the exception is here fraught with meaning. Providence does at times demonstrate the worth of the soul by showing it victorious over circumstances; and the effect of such an instance is always ennobling. Still, there are certain external impresses left on the forms of character, even when they do not touch its essence. The spirit of a Marian Erle might possibly, under all opposing conditions, have remained holy and devoted, as it is here shown; but its mode of expression would have been more homely, and its very purity would have earlier conducted it from those scenes of pollution by which it is so long environed in the story. But when from these considerations we pass to the graver one, that Marian Erle becomes the innocent victim of an outrage almost too horrible to glance at, we naturally demand from the poet overpowering reasons to justify such a result.

Doubtless Mrs. Browning has set forth these terrible details partly to show the nobility of Romney Leigh, who will not allow the foulest indignity of circumstance to shake his constancy to one who is virtually pure. Doubtless the truth that no malignity of fortune can stain an unblemished soul finds a powerful illustration in such a narrative. Yet we are bound to say, that all these ends might have been attained by means less harrowing and repulsive; although we fully admit, that if we could reconcile ourselves to the obnoxious theme, it has been treated with consummate delicacy and power.

Yet again, while on points of taste, we must object to that abrupt invocation of sacred names which so often occurs in the book. Irreverence is the last quality that we should really attribute to Mrs. Browning; but there is a savour of it in her manner which will give needless pain.

In unfolding its general design, the poem touches upon the chief figures in modern society. The poet, the artist, the high-churchman, the pantheist, the woman of convention, the woman of fashion, the seamstress, the mechanic and labourer, with all the varied social problems which such characters suggest, have their place and their comment. Again, there are exquisite descriptions of scenery, a wonderful affluence of fresh and striking imagery, and passages of story intensely dramatic. In treating of the poet's art, which may here stand as the symbol of all intellectual effort, the perception that religious feeling is the prime element of the highest genius is finely conveyed. The transcripts of nature and external life, it is urged, lack their real value, unless they express man's spiritual condition.

"There's not a flower of spring,
That dies ere June, but vaunts itself allied
By issue and symbol, by significance
And correspondence, to that spirit-world
Outside the limits of our space and time,
Whereto we are bound. Let poets give it voice
With human meanings; else they miss the thought,
And henceforth step down lower, stand confessed
Instructed poorly for interpreters,—
Thrown out by an easy cowslip in the text."

The following, too, is nobly felt and expressed:

"Fame itself,
That approbation of the general race,
Presents a poor end (though the arrow speed,
Shot straight with vigorous finger to the white),
And the highest fame was never reached except
By what was aimed above it. Art for art,
And good for God Himself, the essential Good!"

The poet's duty to apprehend sublimity in the present is
not less grand in conception and utterance:

"Every age,
Through being beheld too close, is ill-discerned
By those who have not lived past it. We'll suppose
Mount Athos carved, as Persian Xerxes schemed,
To some colossal statue of a man:
The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,
Had guessed as little of any human form
Up there, as would a flock of browsing goats.
They'd have, in fact, to travel ten miles off
Or ere the giant image broke on them,
Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,
Mouth muttering rhythms of silence up the sky,
And fed at evening with the blood of suns;
Grand torso,—hand, that flung perpetually
The largesse of a silver river down
To all the country pastures. 'Tis even thus
With times we live in,—evermore too great
To be apprehended near.

But poets should
Exert a double vision; should have eyes
To see near things as comprehensively
As if afar they took their point of sight,
And distant things, as intimately deep,
As if they touched them. Let us strive for this.
I do distrust the poet who discerns
No character or glory in his times,
And trundles back his soul five hundred years,
Past moat and drawbridge, into a castle-court,
O not to sing of lizards or of toads
Alive i' the ditch there!—'twere excusable;
But of some black chief, half knight, half sheep-lifter,
Some beauteous dame, half chattel and half queen,
As dead as must be, for the greater part,
The poems made on their chivalric bones.
And that's no wonder: *death inherits death.*"

Free on the whole from the obscurity that counterfeits
depth, the book is not, on the other hand, poetry made easy.
It deals both with imagination and philosophy; and those who
love neither, and yet expect to understand the entire poem,
will be disappointed. Yet there are many pictures invested
with such a glow of feeling, that even a dim imagination
will make them out by the light of the heart. Has there
been any thing yet written of a babe more lovely suggestive
or musical than this? The mother

"Approached the bed, and drew a shawl away:
You could not peel a fruit you fear to bruise
More calmly and more carefully than so,—
Nor would you find within a rosier flushed
Pomegranate—

There he lay, upon his back,
The yearling creature, warm and moist with life
To the bottom of his dimples,—to the ends
Of the lovely tumbled curls about his face;
For since he had been covered over-much
To keep him from the light-glare, both his cheeks
Were hot and scarlet as the first live rose
The shepherd's heart-blood ebbed away into,
The faster for his love. And love was here
As instant! in the pretty baby-mouth,

Shut close as if for dreaming that it sucked;
The little naked feet drawn up the way
Of nestled birdlings; every thing so soft
And tender,—to the little holdfast hands,
Which, closing on a finger into sleep,
Had kept the mould of 't.

The light upon his eyelids pricked them wide,
And, staring out at us with all their blue,
As half perplexed between the angelhood
He had been away to visit in his sleep,
And our most mortal presence,—gradually
He saw his mother's face, accepting it
In change for heaven itself, with such a smile
As might have well been learnt there,—never moved,
But smiled on, in a drowse of ecstasy,
So happy (half with her and half with heaven)
He could not have the trouble to be stirred,
But smiled and lay there. Like a rose, I said:
As red and still indeed as any rose,
That blows in all the silence of its leaves,
Content, in blowing, to fulfil its life."

In almost every page the reader will meet the proofs of
a moral insight, keen and noble, embodied in felicitous
diction. As an instance, take this on the superiority of the
blindest veneration to frigid and learned scepticism:

"Good love, howe'er ill-placed,
Is better for a man's soul in the end
Than if he loved ill what deserves love well.
A pagan, kissing, for a step of Pan,
The wild-goat's hoof-print on the loamy down,
Exceeds our modern thinker who turns back
The strata . . . granite, limestone, coal, and clay,
Concluding coldly with, 'Here's law! Where's God?'"

Nor are examples wanting in which a fine meaning is
disfigured by a reckless audacity of phrase. Thus:

"Headlong leaps
Of waters that cry out for joy or fear
In leaping through the palpitating pines,
Like a white soul tossed out to eternity
With thrills of time upon it."

In many cases, where the talk of frivolous persons is
reported, the language becomes mere prose cut into lengths;
but the dramatic intention is here obvious, and the writer
should be allowed the benefit of it. She never puts trite
dialogue into any mouths but those from which nothing
better would emanate in life.

Still, it must be said that the poem wants some of the
graces of art, even though it often shows that better grace
which is proverbially beyond art's reach. Hasty and even
random execution is often visible. The last touch of the
chisel is lacking, and will be regretted by all except those
sectarian minds who mistake roughness for strength, and
cannot believe that grandeur of idea may consist with accu-
racy of detail. When Mrs. Browning is logical or philo-
sophical her verse is often harsh, and outrages every rule of
scanning. When, on the contrary, she writes from emotion,
the defect rarely occurs; at times, indeed, the lines swell
upon the ear, wave after wave, as it were, with the fullness
and the cadence of a tide. As critics, we of course register
these peculiarities of style for praise or censure; but let us
say (and we can pay no greater homage to Mrs. Browning's
mind) that praise for her merits as an artist is the last
thing we care to tender her. There is a strain of noble
intensity in her book that attracts us from its manner to
its substance. We feel that we have been communing with
a spirit, perhaps somewhat extreme in its scorn of pigmy
natures, and at times confounding narrowness of view with
insincerity of motive, but a spirit so generous, earnest, and
high, that it lifts from the transitory and the mean all that
come within its range; translates us from the world of
shows to that of realities, and makes us feel that the
noblest things are also the most real. There is so much
help, truth, and sympathy in the aspect of such genius,
that we only notice by an after-thought the wreath upon
its brow.

LONDON CHILDREN.

By G. W. THORNBURY,

AUTHOR OF "ART AND NATURE AT HOME AND ABROAD."

I REMEMBER of old time attending a public lecture in Whitechapel. What the lecture was about, I cannot at this distant period take upon me to distinctly say; but this I know, that the very climax and bloom of the evening—the noisy tumultuous hand-clapping moment, the umbrella-knocking and toe-crushing period—was when the lecturer produced a handful of green corn, just picked, and a bunch of ripe wheat-ears saved from last year's harvest, and explained to the children the rise and progress of the quarter loaf, from the small dry yellow seed to the full wonder of the autumn fruitfulness.

Not a child present had, I am sure, ever seen a corn-field; and such delight and twinkling of small pale faces I never beheld since I once attended a meeting of five hundred white-faced bakers, who intended to strike, and were planning a rise in wages,—five hundred bakers, I may say, in a violent and distressing state of fermentation, who found they could not make their own bread by manufacturing other people's.

On my way home from Whitechapel I fell into a muse on the hard lot of London children, whom Fortune has driven out of Paradise, that is, the country, into the flowerless thistly world, which is London. No angling for minnows for them; no knocking down of glossy chestnuts; no dog-roses to pick to pieces; no blue sky even; no swift chase of purposeless sunbeams over field and common;—but instead, black alleys walled out from heaven; subterranean cellars, where even the yellow-toothed rat sickens; noisome fever-garrets, where the spider would be too feeble to trap even the thin fly, were the thin fly in a proper robust state of health, or of an average good constitution.

For them no autumn gold trees wave, or blue violets grow; no rich crabs lurk sour, yet tempting, behind sheltering leaves; no stream babbles its unformed child-music; no bird prates its one untiring thought of love and spring. O, friends, what must the London street-child think of God, for making that city, which he supposes is all God's world! Spring he knows by the bunches of primroses sold by squalid pale men in Oxford Street; autumn by the dead dry leaves that blow and whisk idly about Russell Square. He knows nothing of stillness or of solitude; you can't be quiet in London. His idea of the perfection of the human voice is derived, not from Lind or Grisi, but from Brother Jack, who cries all day past the doors of rich fraudulent bank-directors, "Buy a rope—buy a rope!" a cry which might be thought personal, did we not see Jack means a rope of onions, red and yellow and brazen, with shivery shining skins, and a scent disliked by all respectable people. The child's idea of an octave is not drawn from Mario, but from Uncle Bob's "Salmon—delicate salmon!" a sound which makes musical critics tear their beards, and thrust their fingers in their, alas! too sensitive ears.

I watched a pair of children only yesterday: the eldest girl with her mother's bonnet on, the bonnet too large, and much squeezed and doubled up; the girl overwhelmed with a pile of fat listless babyhood hidden in a shawl; the youngest a little Saxon angel, with dirty face and eager wondering eyes, very quick in their azure changes to various brightnesses and aspects of joy. As to dress, the youngest had very little on but an old dress-coat, the tails sweeping the ground, and evidently much used for purposes of warfare and traction. The pair were on a tour of sight-seeing between school-hours, and I determined to follow them, just to see what amusement they would pick up.

First they halted, with a wistful deprecatory look, alternately coaxing, flattering, and independent, before an old woman's fruit-stall, that stood under an archway not far from a crossing in a street in the Strand, where the river showed by fits below, flashing now and then like a

silver sword half-drawn suddenly in playful anger. The stall was gay with five-fingered chestnut-leaves, and had cherries tied with white thread on sticks. To London children's eyes, they seemed so many blood-red jewels, brought from distant lands of sweetness and delight. Alas, to me had long passed away the great days of bob-cherry and knuckle-down! There were apples too, dry and red as old men's cheeks, and leathery gold pears, and chestnuts, mealy and out at elbows, suffering a crackling martyrdom over a kettle of red-hot coals, and singing as they died. There were nuts, too, mahogany-brown, that the old cheery woman, who was reading a greasy tract and knitting, would roll and shake about in a tempting way that Government ought not to allow; it was so deliciously cruel. A sarcastic and reproachful glance, which signified, "You little miserable creatures, you haven't got a halfpenny; don't stare about here, if you don't buy!" drove the children on; but they stopped at the next crossing. Here was something too good to lose,—a real sham soldier, with a wooden leg and a sham medal on his chicken heart. Why, Lor', this is better than the blind man who stands in the Clapham Road, shuffling about his eyelids, with a dirty card on his breast, on which is written, "Blind from his birth, likewise totally deaf," as if he was rather proud of the thing. They stop and see how the sweeper splashes those who don't give him any thing, and how he grinds his old teeth when a cab almost amputates his toes. The men who sell sweet herbs and boot-laces stay them for a moment; but, great observers as they are, they must run home now, for father comes to tea at five.

Then a chatter and a squeak drives them into instant hysterics. Yes, it's PUNCH; and Punchdom, with its sudden revolutions, its *émeutes*, suppressed revolts, and final tyrannicide, hurries them away to fairy-land, and drowns all thought of mother's hard knuckles, father's fist, and daily short-comings; or perhaps some eventful day presents to their large eyes those Apollos of Southampton Street, the Arabian acrobats, rich in spangles, boneless, extraordinary men, who perform feats of superhuman agility with a jaded and morose air of disconsolate, yet almost regal pleasure. Wonderful sights are waiting at shop-doors, too, for these favoured children: enormous turtles flapping on the backs of fat porters; stuffed birds, all emerald and crimson, standing in conceited attitudes in shop-windows; squirrels in the treadmill at bird-fanciers' doors, with real chickens, that the children feed with their scanty meal.

So that, after all, in spite of black mud, houses, and dark alleys, and screams of quarrelling women, and curses, and dog-fighting, there is some compensation for London children for the flowers, meadows, and the trees that make a low noise at night as if they were audibly breathing, and for the blue skies that ripen at sunset into red. Yes; these poor London children, that stare greedily into pastrycooks' windows, that watch older and richer boys buying fruit at stalls, that push through the legs of an execution-crowd, that laugh when elderly gentlemen trip up, that watch old flaunting dowagers get out of their carriages at Regent-Street doors, that pinch footmen's fictitious calves, that laugh at fussy barristers' wigs, that sing popular melodies, that fly kites and drive hoops in quiet streets,—the pert, ready, lively, sarcastic, suspicious, cynical street-children have their amusements, and do not pine for the country's summer green or autumn orange.

I love these London children, with all their diseased precocity, their pert premature manliness and womanhood, their air of patronage, and their indomitable republican independence; their daring, energy, and restless curiosity are all cherished by me. All the same to them is it whether a pale face and a heap of wet rags is carried dripping on a stretcher to a suburban hospital, or if it be two red-faced cabmen pounding themselves to "purple ruins;"—it is all one for the gesticulating boy, who forgets his special errand in his wider sympathy for the human race in general.

The London child knows nothing of the dear old country sights. He has had no glimpses through black doorways of

gigantic blacksmiths emerging from blazes of orange light; for him are no chasings of stately geese over thirsty commons; for him no silvery dances of merry dace or gold-finned minnows round the green fresh water-cresses in the brook. He traps not the hesitating sparrow or the wily finch; for him no starlings' necks twinkle, opal and emerald, in the sunlight that bathes with gold the elm-tops. The jolting and ceaseless thunder of the Fleet-Street omnibuses is for him a poor exchange for the mellow pounding of the thresher's flail, or the rasp and tinkle of the whetstone and the scythe. When he meets in St. Giles's a band of Irish reapers, with their sickles twisted with hay, and their faces turned country-ward, he thinks little of the golden seas they will soon be wading in waist-high; or how the larks, a thousand strong, will carol to them as they toil with their hot faces all in a row. He sees man's spoiled muslin-work till he forgets the perfection of God's wild-flowers.

The London child's world is one of blank squares, with black bushes like worn-out brooms, and leaves on which the lamplight shows the black dew; soot-dripped statues on sooty pedestals; silent by-streets and noisy courts, where every body seems washing and no one washed, where half the population are children, and the rest women and thieves. He plays with oyster-shells, or builds palaces of mud. Walls particoloured with handbills are his delight, and the Temple Gardens are his idea of rural perfection, if it wasn't that he had seen Rosherville. He is always watching, whether he is an errand-boy studying the flageolet, or a butcher's boy with slate castanets in either hand—now it's a shoal of black lobsters who object to being dyed red; or, at the same fishmonger's bulkhead, a prism-coloured mackerel, or a basket of eels, who will tie themselves into dark slippery knots. To-day he rubs his nose flat against the window of a shop by St. Paul's, and sees the silken vanities that flaunt in mockery of the church and its stone seraphs and protesting saints. To-morrow, the purple satins and the yellow tiffanies that stream in coloured cataracts in other windows are better to him than a peep-show. For him the street ballad-seller tapestries the black railings with fluttering songs; and in the square of Leicester the itinerant astronomer offers men a view of another world for "one penny." Every one who passes him is to his eyes a sight, an amusement, whether porter with white apron and shining badge, lawyer with friz-wig and blue-bag, brewer with quilted doublet and copper-nailed shoes, shoe-black in scarlet, or even the dismal man in livery who deals out handbills as if he were dealing at whist. The jeweller's shops, with their golden trophies; or the cobbler's stall, where the busy dwarf jerks the thread,—it is all one to him; for he is a child-philosopher, and from all things draws inferences. The London boy is generally a cynic, and contemptuous of foreigners, particularly thin shivering Hindoos; and quizzical Germans with red mops of beards are to him guys—just that—guys. He is all eyes, and is quick as a spy, keen as a detective.

I still look on London children, I repeat, as so many fallen angels driven from the paradise of the country to the purgatory of the town. Exiled from all pleasant sights, scents, and sounds, to inhale the exhalations of sewers, to batten on fogs, and to toil through mud, deafened by the brute violence of the endless roll and roar of trade. To live only, and not to live well, is the object of the poor in cities. The flowers he sees are cut and dying flowers; the birds, the poulterers'. His sky is a lurid vision; his air, bearable miasma. He is thrown cheek by jowl with vice, as poverty always is in cities. His life will be toil, and its end the workhouse; his grave will be in a dripping corner of that grassless burial-ground that makes rich men shudder to look at or to think of.

Do London sights compensate children for the loss of their country birthright? I trow not. No, not even those great globes of crimson blood that incarnadine the common pavement with rich reflections cast through the chemists' windows; not even the Zoolu's skull and the alligator's jaw at the old curiosity shop; nor the medieval upholsterer's

helpless armour and china teacups;—no, not even the blue-eyed portraits next door to the dentist's, nor the miles of tapeworm put in pickle in the enterprising medicine-man's window in Long Acre.

Not but what there is something very supernatural and haunted about the broken windows of a house in Chancery, with its walls sloughed and speckled with posting-bills and notices. A London hearse, too, with its nodding black feathers and red-nosed coachman, is a thing to be remembered; so is a country-waggon, with a red-cheeked girl staring from under the awning-tilt for the first time at daybreak at the unheeding town. There is no place where amusement is so thrust upon you and forced down your throat as in this London. The broken-down gentlemen that lurk about at ginshop-doors, the wrinkled veterans at cab-stands, are all part of the London boy-experience. Every street is a leaf in the page of the great volume he can't help reading. The tinker with his flaring kettle of coals, the sparks spiriting from his sandstone-wheel, the chair-mender on the door-step, the grinning Italian with his shuffling feet, the sly groom in the Quadrant with a stolen dog under his arm, the itinerant almanac-seller, are all his friends and fellows. The beadle, the costermonger, the pugilist, the soldier, the city-man, the beggar, the cabman, the carter, pass before him in shifts and changes, and all for his amusement.

Over this great mammon city, with its black dome, red roofs, and white towers, the coppery fire of the blank sun smoulders through the fog; and all for his delight as much as for the big thirty-thousand-pounder just stepping into his barouche and bound for Clapham. For him, through tawny smoke and lurid clouding, break the soft blue spots of summer sky, like glimpses of the very veil that hides Heaven's Holy of Holies. The stars shine and interchange for him, though he does live underneath an alley, and next door to a potato-cellar. For him every sunset flowers and widens into the great black blossom of night, on whose sable leaves the stars shine but as dewdrops.



THE CONDENSED AIR-BATH.

BY AN M.D.

THE effects on the health and spirits of the various changes of weather, only too numerous and sudden in this capricious climate of ours, are well known and constantly experienced by every one. The circumstances to be taken into account as producing these effects, in connection with changes of weather, are numerous. Differences of temperature and of amount of moisture, the force and direction of the winds, electrical changes, ever-varying degrees of light, have each their effects on the human system; but there is one circumstance,—depending to a considerable extent, indeed, on some of those already mentioned,—not so perceptible to an ordinary observer as most of them, which nevertheless must bear a large share in producing the results of atmospheric changes. We allude to the varying density, weight, or pressure of the air, indicated by the rise and fall of the mercurial column in the barometer; the former, of course, indicating an increase, the latter a diminution, in the weight of the air. Judging by our sensations merely, we should be inclined to suppose that the state of the atmosphere was just the reverse of what it really is. In fine weather, when the barometer is generally high, we feel a lightness and exhilaration of spirits, an increased aptitude for exertion; while nothing is more common, in an opposite state of the weather, than to hear it said that there seems to be a weight in the air. We then

feel heavy, languid, and unwilling to exert ourselves, and our spirits are more or less depressed. These varying effects are more perceptible on the occurrence of sudden changes.

The effects of diminished atmospheric pressure also are manifested in a marked degree by the change from low to high altitudes, and have been graphically described by many travellers and aeronauts; while those of increased pressure are experienced on descending in the diving-bell or into deep mines.

There has just been introduced into this country a means of taking advantage of increased atmospheric pressure in the treatment of disease, which, although it has been in successful operation in France for a considerable number of years, has attracted but little attention from the members of the medical profession in this country. It is, however, to an Englishman that we must ascribe the merit of making the first steps in this direction, without at the same time detracting from the deserts of the French philosopher, of whose researches we have afterwards to speak. So long ago as the year 1664, Dr. Henshaw constructed an air-tight chamber, in which, by means of a large pair of organ-bellows, the air could be rarefied or condensed; and he seems to have applied this means to the treatment of various diseases, using apparently rarefied air for those of a chronic character, and condensed air for the acute. The degree of rarefaction or condensation was regulated by the sensations of the patient as regarded his respiration. He states, however, that difficulty of breathing is oftener experienced in condensed than in rarefied air. We shall find, as we proceed, that the contrary is the true state of the case, under moderate increase of pressure. These experiments do not appear to have led to any useful results; and no doubt from various causes, especially the insufficiency of the means available for the purpose, and the supposed dangers of increased pressure. The subject seems to have fallen into unmerited neglect, till M. Tabarié, in 1832, presented to the Institute of France a report on the effects of differences of atmospheric pressure; and starting from the idea that an element so indispensable as the air to the existence of all organised beings must also, by modifications of its physical and chemical qualities, become an inexhaustible source of useful influences on the organism, after long and laborious research established this fact, that compressed air is an agent of the highest importance in the treatment of various maladies, and enunciated certain principles serving as guides for its efficient application. He was assisted in his researches by Dr. Bertin, of Montpellier; and Dr. Pravaz, of Lyons, has made a series of independent investigations, the results of which he has published in an essay, which received the honour of being *couronné* by the Institute of France in 1850. M. Tabarié found that, to produce salutary effects, the pressure must be gradually increased, sustained for a time at a certain degree of intensity, and again gradually diminished; and that the amount of pressure calculated to be of greatest service is moderate, an increase above this not being attended by any increased advantage, but rather the reverse, as he believes that the principal salutary agency is *continuance* of the high pressure, that the transition from any pressure to a higher has a disturbing effect, and that therefore the shorter, within certain limits, we can make the interval of transition the better. Dr. Pravaz also has shown, that beyond a certain limit no advantage is to be expected, principally because the pressure of the air, when highly increased, overcomes the resisting elasticity of the lungs. The amount of pressure considered most beneficial is about two-fifths of an atmosphere additional; that is, about six pounds on the square inch more than the ordinary pressure of the air, which is fifteen pounds. These researches have led to the establishment of compressed-air baths at Montpellier, Lyons, Nice, and more recently at Ben Rhydding, in Yorkshire, where we have had an opportunity of experiencing and observing its effects. We shall now proceed to give some account of the construction, use, and effects of the bath itself.

An iron chamber is constructed, of sufficient strength to bear the increased pressure, provided with windows of strong plate-glass, and a door fitting in such a way as to prevent any escape of air. A pair of force-pumps communicates with the chamber by a pipe, opening by numerous minute apertures in the floor, and is worked by a steam-engine. By a simple arrangement, a sufficient quantity of air is allowed to pass off constantly to keep that in the chamber of the purity requisite for the purpose of respiration. A barometric tube is placed outside, its upper end open, and communicating therefore with the external air; while the cup, or curved end below, and the mercury contained in it, are subjected, by means of a tube, to the pressure of the air inside the bath. The height of the mercurial column, therefore, will always indicate the difference in pressure between the air outside and that inside; and a scale is attached, showing the amount in pounds.

The interior of the chamber is furnished with seats, a couch for weak patients, and any other convenience that may be requisite; and the iron walls are cased inside with wood. The entrance and exit of the air should be so managed as to cause as little noise as possible, so that patients may sleep, if so disposed. There is an arrangement also by means of which, without allowing of any escape of air, small articles, such as books, letters, &c., may be conveyed into or out of the chamber (for in this bath patients may read, write, or converse, as they please); and by means of a bell, those inside can summon an attendant, to whom orders are conveyed by writing on a slip of paper, and showing it at one of the windows. If necessary, an apparatus may be adapted for heating or cooling the air before it enters the chamber. The barometer and the valve for regulating the escape of the air may be placed in the engine-room, so that the whole is under the eye of a single attendant.

The patients, then, being seated in the chamber, the door is closed, and the engine set in motion. By regulating its velocity and the amount of air escaping, the pressure is raised to the amount of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb to 6 lb on the square inch, as indicated by the barometer, at a rate of 1 lb in five minutes. When it has reached the desired maximum, the engine still continues to work, as there must be a constant supply of fresh air. The high pressure is kept up steadily for a time, varying from half an hour to an hour, and is then reduced as gradually as it rose. In general, the entire sitting occupies two hours; but the amount of pressure and the length of time must be adapted to the capabilities of the patients, some being unable, from weakness or peculiarities of constitution, to bear it so long.

The first feeling generally remarked by an individual in the bath is a sense of pressure, sometimes, though rarely, amounting to acute pain, in the ears. This is easily accounted for, when we remember that the internal ear communicates with the throat by a small tube, and is separated from the external by a membrane commonly called the "drum of the ear." The pressure on the drum, then, is caused by the loss of balance between the air outside and that inside the ear, the former not gaining immediate admittance to the internal ear from the walls of the tube, at its opening into the throat, being in contact. Swallowing once or twice, or endeavouring after inspiration to expel the breath while the mouth and nostrils are kept closed, will in most cases open the tube and establish the balance of pressure. When the maximum pressure is attained, the sensation in the ears generally ceases, but returns again as the pressure is brought down, from a reversal of the causes above mentioned; the condensed air in the interior of the ears not finding a ready exit by the tube, and therefore pressing the drum outwards. After a few sittings in the bath, the tube commonly continues pervious, and no uneasiness is experienced. The saliva is generally increased in quantity. But the best marked effects are those on the circulation and respiration, particularly in persons labouring under maladies implicating these functions; for it is to be remarked, that a person in health

may not experience much, if any, change beyond the pressure in the ears. When the pressure reaches its maximum intensity, or rather after it has continued for a time at that intensity, the pulse undergoes in most cases a diminution in velocity, varying from a few beats per minute even to forty-five; and what is most remarkable is, that in many cases the pulse does not again rise after coming out of the bath to the same amount as before, and so its velocity has thus been permanently reduced. The same remarks apply to the rapidity of the respiration, which, as is well known, is in some diseases much increased; while under the action of the compressed air difficult and rapid breathing becomes easier and slower, and even persons whose respiration is healthy find a remarkable facility of breathing—feeling, indeed, as if breathing were unnecessary. In most persons there is a greater flow of spirits and increased appetite for food; and in some drowsiness comes on in the bath, and sleep is improved after it.

The diseases in which the air-bath is found most beneficial are those of the air-passages—such as relaxed sore-throat, loss of voice, diseases of the windpipe, chronic bronchitis, asthma, consumption, palpitation of the heart, and chronic congestion of the brain.

On the theory of the mode of action of the air-bath we shall say but little. There are one or two circumstances, however, connected with it which we may briefly notice as contributing very much to the results. First, the effects of increased pressure on the tissues with which the air comes in contact, especially in the air-passages, which may easily be conceived to have a tendency to diminish congestion, that is, increased quantity with diminished circulation of blood in a part. Secondly, M. Pravaz has shown that an increase of the capacity of the chest is caused mainly by the compressed air opposing a greater resistance to the natural contractibility of the lungs. And thirdly, in breathing condensed air, we receive into the system, through the lungs, an increased quantity of its vital ingredient, oxygen-gas; for not only is the actual volume of air inhaled increased by the greater facility of respiration, but that volume contains a larger quantity of oxygen than an equal volume of air at the ordinary pressure, though the *proportion* of oxygen to nitrogen remains the same. How important a due supply of oxygen is to the system, and what beneficial results may be expected to flow, in many cases, from an increased supply, we cannot here fully explain. One thing will be obvious to every one, that if oxygen is necessary to the system, a patient whose lungs are so affected as to diminish the quantity of air respired, must suffer from the want of a due supply of that gas. This want, then, the air-bath tends to supply, both by introducing air charged with an additional amount of oxygen, and by increasing the capacity of the lungs for receiving it.

The results already obtained in the treatment of disease by this method are very striking; and there can be little doubt that it is destined to become one of the most valuable means of alleviation and cure in a large class of maladies.

Among the cases we have seen treated at Ben Rhydding, Yorkshire, with favourable results, may be noted one of palpitation of the heart, and two cases of consumption.

One of the most remarkable cases we have noticed, however, is that of an old soldier who had suffered from chronic bronchitis and asthma for the long period of twenty-seven years. Here also there was increased mucus; and in some parts of the chest a wheezing or cooing sound, generally accompanying asthma. After the first sitting the cooing was gone, and after five baths the mucus sounds were much less distinct; and other favourable changes had taken place in the chest. This man's pulse before commencing the baths was 108 per minute; during the first bath it fell to 84. When examined the day after his fifth sitting it was 96. His weight increased in five days three pounds and a half. But a still more remarkable change and improvement had taken place. When first examined, it was ascertained that the utmost amount of air he could expel from his lungs, after the deepest

possible inspiration, was 80 cubic inches; 180 less than a man of his height in health ought to breathe. After five sittings, the amount was 150 cubic inches. His breathing, as might under these circumstances be expected, was much relieved, and his sleep greatly improved. In the two cases mentioned before, the increase of vital capacity was by no means so great; but still remarkable, considering the amount of morbid deposit in the lungs. In one it rose from 73 to 80; in the other, from 130 to 140 cubic inches after ten sittings.

Such results are truly encouraging, and give good reason to anticipate still further advances in the treatment of that sad malady which annually destroys so many of the young, the beautiful, and the accomplished, in our island; and we may expect that when the benefits of the air-bath become more extended, it will do away with the necessity, in many cases, of patients' seeking in other lands the mild atmosphere they cannot find in their own, and too often suffering and dying far from the friends and comforts of home.

THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

II.

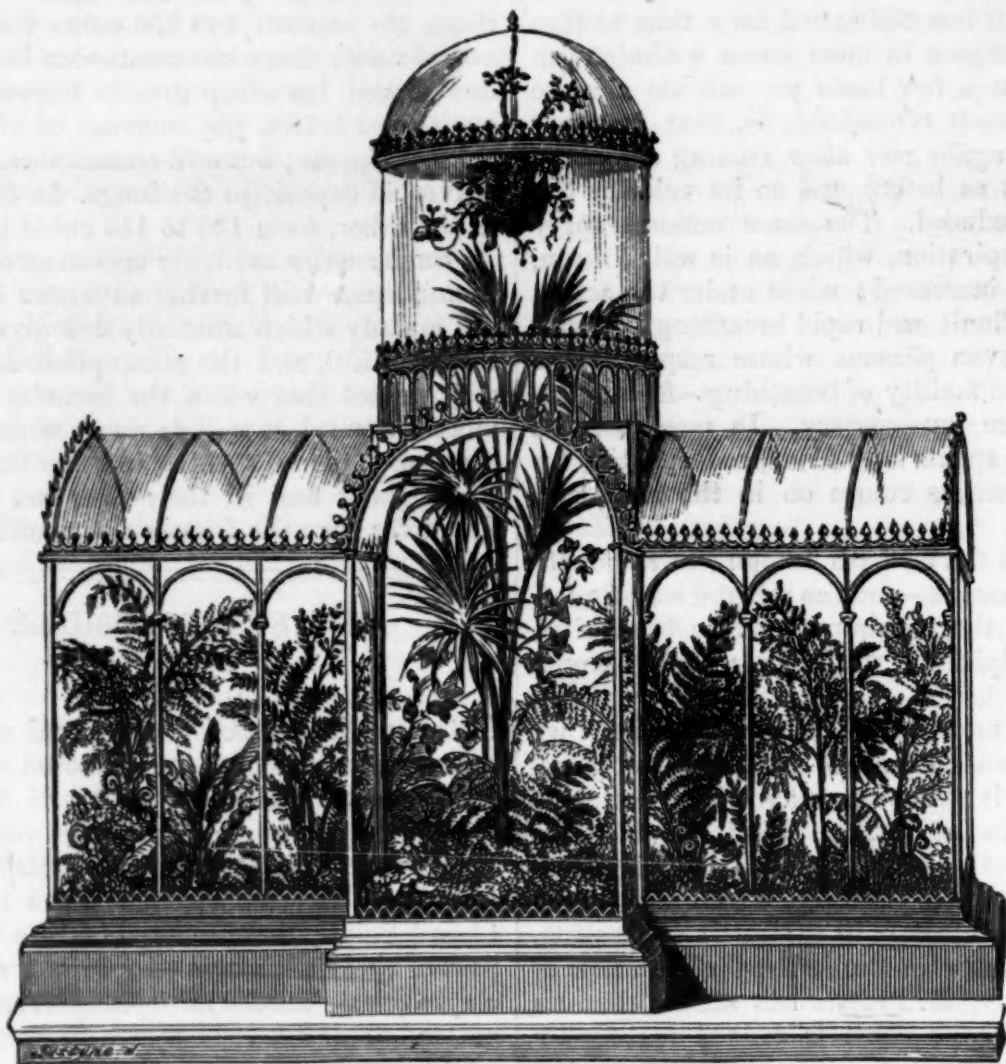
In the neighbourhood of the canal are extensive yards and warehouses, in which are collected or stored away the raw materials on which the skill and taste of the artisan are shortly to be expended. These masses of flint, of so little value at home in the chalk districts; these blocks of steatite, amazingly like the specimens we brought away from the Lizard Point; these cubes of white clay, the very counterpart of those we saw being carted away from the Cornish clay-works,—are the far-fetched treasures of the Staffordshire potter. This art took root here in some distant age, when men were contented with mere earthen jars and beechen platters. Here it spent its little-progressing infancy; here it gained its strength under the stimulus afforded by wealth and luxury; and here most undoubtedly it has attained perfection. Some poor wanderer, perhaps, centuries ago, discovered that the country afforded clay to mould and coal to bake, and here set up his wheel. His trade thrived, he employed his children, and hired labourers to help him; and now, though most of the materials of modern pottery are fetched into Staffordshire from a great distance, the wheel still revolves in its primitive simplicity, and Staffordshire-ware is to be found wherever the English language is spoken.

A familiar sound of heavy dull hammering calls us to look into a shed from which the noise proceeds, and here we find a stamping-apparatus precisely similar to that used in Cornwall for reducing tin-ore to powder; here employed in pulverising the burnt flints, which play a very important part in the finer kinds of ware. The use of flint as an ingredient in potters' clay is said to have owed its origin to the following accident. A potter, named Asthery, travelling in London, perceived something amiss with one of his horse's eyes; an ostler at Dunstable said he could soon cure him, and for that purpose put a common flint-stone into the fire. The potter, observing it to be, when taken out, of a fine white colour, immediately conceived the idea of improving his ware by the addition of this material to the whitest clay he could procure. Accordingly he sent home a quantity of the flint-stones of that country, where they are plentiful among the chalk; and, by mixing them with tobacco-pipe clay, produced a white stoneware much superior to any that had been seen before. Some of the other potters soon discovered the source of this superiority, and did not fail to follow his example. For a long time they pounded the flints in private rooms, by manual labour, in mortars; but many of the poor workmen suffered severely from the dust of the flint getting into their lungs, and producing pulmonary disorders. These disorders, and the increasing demand for the flint-powder, induced them to try to grind it by mills of various constructions; and this method, being both effectual and safe, has continued in practice ever since.

THE PLANTING OF A WARDIAN CASE.

CRYSTAL Palaces for Home have been treated of as to their general principles; and we have endeavoured to show that unless they are regarded as miniature greenhouses no permanent success can be expected. Since the appearance of these papers in the NATIONAL MAGAZINE, several other journals have taken up the question, and have adopted similar views. Mr. Glenny, in Jerrald's paper, Mr. Appleby, in the *Cottage Gardener*, and other practical writers, have called public attention to the original failings of the Wardian cases; and though we should hesitate to say that we gave the hint for this new view of the subject, it is certain that *we were the first* to analyse the causes of failure, and point out the remedy. A correspondent has called our attention to some passages in the pamphlet of Mr. Stephen Ward, alleging that we have dealt with it unjustly. We desire to act fairly and openly; and the only difference between ourselves and Mr. Ward is this: he trusts for ventilation to the impossibility of hermetically sealing the case; we insist that ventilation should be properly provided for. Between the two the difference is great indeed.

The design for a crystal palace is intended for the adornment of a window, a conservatory, or any position where its outline would produce a pictorial effect, and where abundance of daylight and little sun would reach it. We need say nothing as to its construction, except that access is to be obtained to the interior by having the front of the central compartment and the end of each wing fitted on hinges, so that the glass-plate forms a door. In each division the framework running along the roof should also be finely perforated, and a slide of zinc fitted so as to move to and fro in a groove, to admit air, or close the ventilating holes, according to circumstances. The two wings and the central compartment might be made separate, so as to fit neatly together, and allow the three parts to be removed from the trays in which the ferns are planted. If so constructed, several trays for plants may be made; and when the vegetation loses beauty, as it may do with the changes of the seasons, the trays can be lifted out, and fresh ones containing new sets of plants inserted in their place, and those removed from the case carried to the greenhouse to be regenerated by careful treatment. This is the way the Wardian cases are managed by the nobility, who contract with nurserymen to supply trays of plants from time to time; and this trick has been kept secret, so that many a connoisseur not *au fait* in the matter has been puzzled again and again to discover by what process the Wardian cases are brought to such perfection just as the London season opens. For every Wardian case we should recommend this plan; for it is agreeable to change the vegetation occasionally, however well the plants may be doing, with careful management.



The case here figured is planted as follows. In the centre is the beautiful dwarf palm of the south of Europe, *Chamaerops humilis*. At its base grow some dwarf ferns and lycopods—such as the Tunbridge filmy fern, Wilson's filmy fern, the True Maiden-hair, *Adiantum capillus veneris*, *Asplenium marinum*; the lovely little bladder ferns, *Cystopteris fragilis*, and *C. alpina*; with *Lycopodium stolonifera*, *formosa*, *denticulata*, and *apotheciae*.

In the left wing are specimens of *Lastrea cristata*, the crested fern; *Lastrea filix mas*, the common male fern; the lovely Hart's Tongue, *Scolopendrium vulgare*, of which there are at least twenty-five distinct varieties; *S. vulgare proliferum* being very

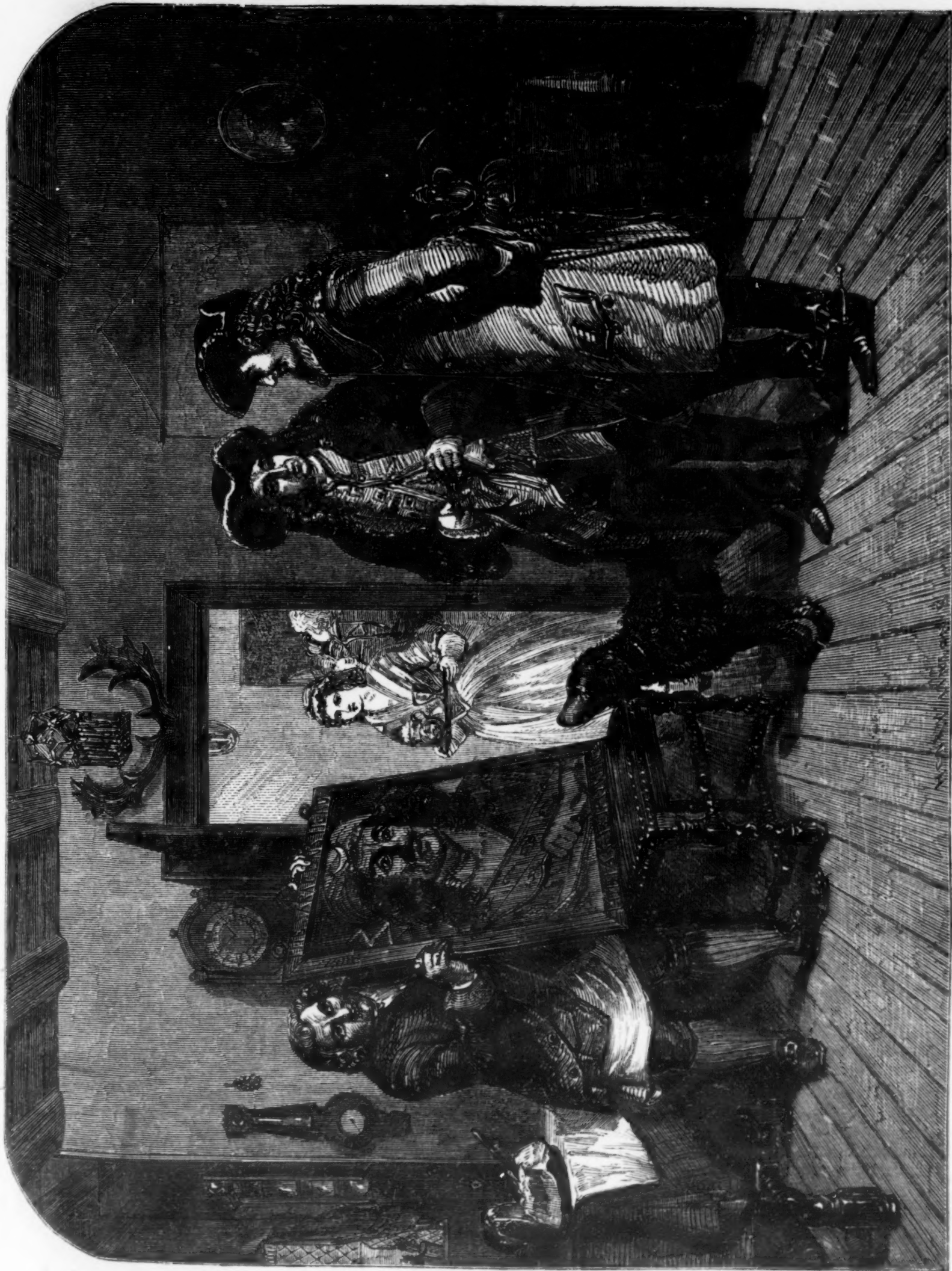
desirable as a diminutive curiosity: it bears little plants on its fronds. On the right of the Hart's Tongue, *Osmunda regalis*, the most renowned of British ferns, completes the planting of this side, as far as conspicuous plants are concerned.

In the right wing the graceful Lady fern, *Athyrium filix faemina*, throws up her plumes of verdant feathers. At her feet is the common polypody, *Polypodium vulgare*; the commonest and most easily cultivated, and, with two or three exceptions, the most beautiful and distinct of all the British ferns. Another polypody, *P. dryopteris*, rises from the hollow below it: it has one clear stem, with three branching divisions of the frond; the colour a most refreshing green, and the whole aspect of the plant distinct and elegant. The common brake, *Pteris aquilina*, and *Lastrea spinulosa*, complete the planting on this side. All the plants are drawn from nature.

For covering the diversified surface and filling the hollows of the rock-work, there are many interesting British ferns and flowering-plants suitable. Spleenworts, the Ad-der's-tongue, *Asplenium lanceolatum*, *A. trichomanes*, and *Trichomanes radicans*, are low-growing ferns that delight in the moist air of a Wardian case; and among flowering-plants, the pretty *Drosera rotundifolia*, Marsh Pennywort, Ground Ivy, Hound's-tongue, Wood Oxalis, Rosy Oxalis (a border-flower), Germander Speedwell, and common small-leaved Ivy, are gems in their way.

The same soil will suit the whole of these, namely, one-third fibrous peat, one-third loam, and one-third silver-sand, with a moderate mixture of broken flower-pots and soft charcoal. The soil should *not* be sifted, the coarser its texture the better; but the several ingredients should be well incorporated, and the whole brought to a friable and light texture. A layer of crocks should be placed below the soil, for drainage.

Most of the nurseries contain collections of ferns from which selections may be made. Should any difficulty be experienced in obtaining just what are required, Mr. Sim, of Foot's Cray, Kent, can supply from his splendid collection any kinds, whether British or foreign. SHIRLEY HIBBERD.



SPECIMENS OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL: NO. VIII.

SCENE FROM THE "SPECTATOR."

PAINTED BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.

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A SCENE FROM THE "SPECTATOR."

By W. P. FRITH, R.A.

AMONG the other tokens of affection which Sir Roger de Coverley's neighbours were frequently exhibiting for that most worthy of country-knights,—the Quixote of modern times,—the Spectator relates that a former servant of his who had set up a hostelry in that part of the country was struck with the idea of having a portrait of him painted for a sign, doubtless reckoning that such a mark of respect to this common friend of all the country round would be duly appreciated by Sir Roger's friends from far and near. This was done, and the portrait suspended from the appropriate post in front of the inn. There it hung a week, until the unexpected and most undesirable compliment came to the ears of the man so honoured; he, with that chivalric consideration which is one of the most subtle characteristics of Addison's greatest creations, went to see this work of art; and finding that it was really intended as the highest honour which could possibly be paid by his old servant to him, took no offence, but quietly said that he considered himself quite unworthy of such a compliment, and suggested that a few touches would sufficiently alter the face to something else, and promised to be at the cost of doing this. The artist was again called in; and by the addition of whiskers and an exaggerated expression to the countenance, turned it into a tolerable representation of the "Saracen's Head;" but the worst result of this was, that a strong resemblance remained to the good knight himself.

The scene Frith has chosen is where the Spectator and Sir Roger are inspecting the picture after its metamorphosis. This picture is one of the very best of this artist's works, in a class which he seems to have made almost his own by his perfect success therein. It will not fail to catch the observer's notice, how truly he has given the good old-gentlemanly aspect of the knight, not without a touch of vanity most becoming to the enslavers of the fair widow. Witness the black wig and feathered hat. How capitally the expression of nervous irresolute benevolence which belonged to him is shown by his way of standing, and the action of wiping the spectacles; the look of appeal, too, at the Spectator himself, not without a suggestion that his vanity had been secretly flattered by the mere fact of that outrageous compliment!

The Spectator's attitude is also most excellently characteristic; see the stoop of the shoulders, like that of an habitually observant and thoughtful man; the genial laugh. Notice the different manner in which his feet place themselves on the floor to the way in which Sir Roger has his, and the way of use with which he holds the whip behind him. The dog's half-dubious look of recognition is, however, one of the finest parts of the design of the picture, and one which the text does not suggest.

It is amusing to notice how the addition of whiskers, the change to a bare neck and dishevelled hair in the portrait, have metamorphosed Sir Roger into the Saracen; and also how even this could not entirely overcome the likeness, although the panther's skin thrown over the shoulders, and the bow and quiver, are far removed enough from an idea of the original. There is an excellent piece of humorous perception by the artist in putting flashes of lightning playing about the head of the ferocious Syrian. This is one of those points of wit which are so frequently found in Frith's works.

The host's half-conscious deprecatory look as he appeals with the eye to the Spectator, his hostile costume and attitude, as though he had got into an habitual start, with "Coming, sir, coming!" like the "Anon, anon!" of Shakspeare's Francis, is well marked.

The luncheon is set out on the table, and introduced in the picture in order to allow of the presence of the girl. See how healthily pretty she is, coming through the sunbeams. Frith's waiting-girls are always capital. Witness his "Sherry, sir?" which is so popular at present.

The county-map on the wall, the tea-board, arranged after the fashion of hostesses, behind the punch-bowl and coffee-pot, are points well made in the picture, as well as the look of the chairs and tables, evidently from some mansion, and perhaps Sir Roger's gifts to his old servant on starting in business; the footman drinking at the bar on the other side of the house-passage, the hostess behind, and the string of lemons suspended from the ceiling in the further room, are parts of character which we should be sorry to miss.

The Spectator, relating the story, says: "Sir Roger, upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if I thought it possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence; but upon the knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a Saracen, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, 'that much might be said on both sides.'" This is one of the finest hits in all the series of papers, which is unquestionably Addison's *chef-d'œuvre*.

It may be remarked of Frith's paintings, that although it is to be regretted that his style of execution is not more solid, he is yet beyond doubt the most successful of the humorous painters of the day; that he deals with the vanities of men with a skill and delicacy of perception and gentlemanly feeling which is only inferior to the manner in which Hogarth dealt with their crimes and follies. Frith is to humorists what Hogarth is to satirists; and higher praise than this it would be difficult to give to any man.

The picture we have engraved is very brilliant and powerful,—of course not so rich in colour as some of Frith's other works; his excellent judgment would not allow him to indulge in this quality in a sober English scene; but, as the reader will see from the engraving, the expressions of the faces are as full of character and humour as they can be. He is one of the few painters who, having confined themselves to almost a single range of subjects, have not fallen into the besetting sin of mannerism. This work is one of the most solid of his pictures, far more so than one which attracted much more attention,—*"The Coming of Age,"*—and is one of his most excellent works in his best style. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847.

JOHN PIKE YAPP.

A TALE OF MAYO.

By THE AUTHOR OF "PAUL FERROLL."

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

THE few people in the neighbourhood who were above the rank of peasants themselves did what they could for the universal distress; but, after all, it was but prolonging death by starvation for the most part. Twice a-week some few gave to some few. Every body was poor, and they could do no more. Then the poor souls, with their wretched cans, or broken pitchers or cups, would crowd in hungry multitudes about the doors; and some would receive, and many would fail of receiving, the pittance which seemed necessary to keep life within them. Yet they lived on; and how? It would be hard to answer that question. But, for instance, Lewis had a lean and hungry dog, to which, except in the matter of giving him any thing to eat, all the family were kind. Even Lewis, when he was trying to doze on the stool, with his back to the wall, would call him to his knee; and hungry man and hungry dog would warm each other into a sleep that comforted both. The children, of course, were its companions; when not too miserable, they still played with it, and it still followed them as they toddled by the brook, looking over the bog for some remaining berry. This dog Lewis took one day from the sun, where it lay shivering, and without a word to any one killed it before them, as if he neither saw nor heard them. He was in a transport of hunger; and when the prospect of satisfying it occurred to him, he could see nothing but that one object. Timmy was

relieved from his own wretched life, skinned, cut in pieces, and laid over the smouldering turf, while the children yet screamed around; and then, like a savage, Lewis tore the unpalatable morsel with his teeth. The wife and children also ceased to lament; the irresistible smell and sight of food overpowered all the rest, and in silence they too partook of the half-cannibal meal.

When they had done, the wife prepared to lay by something that remained; but Lewis interfered:

"Tib," said he to the eldest child, "take the bit to Pike, with my sarvice; but mind you, Tib, don't say it was poor Timmy." And forth from the hut he walked leisurely, and lay himself down under the shelter of a wall, there to go profoundly to sleep.

Whether the meal did good or not, I cannot tell. However it may have been, Lewis's wife Nancy, a few days after, passed from active illness to passive; for, indeed, the change was little more than that she could no longer drag her weakened frame about, but sank down to perish. Pike heard of it, and came with a quarter-pint of his goat's-milk to do his neighbour good. "And I took it very kind of ye," said he, "sending us some of your own mate the day by; queer mate it was though; who give it ye?"

Lewis with his foot pushed something which lay on the floor towards the corner. Pike's eye fell upon it:

"Sure 'twasn't the dog we ate?" said he.

"Why not?" said Lewis.

"The mate had an unkind taste anyhow," said Pike, his eyes fixed on the paw, which nobody had thrown out of doors. "But the dog's aisy, and was born to help Christians, the poor baste. Notwithstanding here's a more humane potion like, for the poor 'oman, that I've spared ye the day."

"More of the illigant milk!" cried Lewis, his hands twitching, his mouth twisting, at the sight of it.

"Let alone—let alone!" said Pike; "not a dhrop except for Nancy only, the crone."

"Give it her, quick!" said Lewis; "I don't want to see it with my eye; take't away, lest it be too much for me." And squeezing his rags about him, he turned and went out of the cabin, picking up a bit of dry stick and chewing it, as if to employ the saliva which the delicious morsel had excited by its mere sight.

It comforted the poor woman for half an hour; perhaps for so much time it delayed her death; but death at that time was the familiar friend of those whom it took, though still hideous and dreaded by those whom it only threatened. She was the first in the immediate neighbourhood whom the famine destroyed, and she was buried with decency in the Catholic burial-ground; but a month after that, nearly all attempt to lay the dead respectfully to their long slumber ceased; and left to themselves, the perishing peasantry could but just remove out of sight, any where, the corpses which encumbered their cabins. There was none to bear them to the churchyard, none to receive them there, no power to invoke spiritual help; for the faint remains of life were employed in feeding its own flame, and all interests were absorbed in suffering, buried under the dead weight of famine.

Lewis's family soon dwindled to two children. Pike's at this time were down in the fever, as they termed it. None had died yet; but his little boy had been the first seized, and would plainly be the first to go. Honor held him in her lap, or sat by his side most of the day. Pike led out the goat, which they had never trusted far, when the children were its guides, since the day of Lewis's robbery. Pike's frame, accustomed to hardship, still fought bravely against famine; and he as yet felt no symptom of the famine-bred fever. He would take his little girl with him, —the fair-haired child, whose pretty locks so pleased his eye, and whom her parents had saved as yet from the worst extremities of hunger by sacrifices which destroyed themselves.

It chanced one day that the father and child had climbed

the hill above their cabin, and were slowly attending upon the goat by the side of the mountain-path which ran along the face of the ridge. It was the end of the third quarter since Pike had here parted from his wife, and since Mr. Threader, making his periodical round, had witnessed their tearful parting. Again Mr. Threader was taking the same route; and when he came upon Pike and his child he stopped, with some vague idea it might be the peasant whom he had then seen, and asked, "Did he remember him?"

"Ay, by token the three tinpennies," said Pike, scratching off the ragged remains of his hat, and joyfully recognising his benefactor.

"And were they lucky? Did they bring the luck you expected?" said the Englishman.

"In throth did they," said Pike. "I remember prospering terrible well."

"Remember?" said Mr. Threader; "why it's not so long since."

"It seems to me before time," said Pike.

"Did you get the three guineas?" asked Mr. Threader. "If so, you ought to be rich still."

"The rint," said Pike, "the rint swallowed all."

"Well, I must say your honesty was most commendable," said the Englishman, "to provide for your rent when you were in such want yourself. It's very honourable to you."

"But look ye there, yer honour," said Pike; and he pointed a little farther, where three small heaps of ruin lay together,—shattered walls without roof, grass growing in the windows, stanchions in the stones, but no doors. "My own full cousin, and my wife's half-cousin, and another, lived there; and the roofs were taken away as they laid on the floors—all for rint. I don't complain," added Pike; "but they had not got it, and I had."

"What became of them?" said Mr. Threader.

"Dead," said Pike; "and for that matter it wouldn't matter if we all was with 'em,—and shall be, some sooner, some later."

"Nay, I hope times may mend. Have you lost any friends yet, my poor fellow?"

"My boy's a-dying," said Pike, "and Honor's sickening this morn."

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Mr. Threader. "But the little maiden—no, no, she's well yet."

"Ay, bless her!" said Pike; "she was the last as ate any thing among us."

"Could you eat again, my pretty curly-pate?" said Mr. Threader, taking out a sandwich-case and a flask containing a slender glass of whisky.

The child's eager eyes answered.

"Take my luncheon," said Mr. Threader, reaching down to her a slice of bread and meat. "And you, my nan, swallow this drop; it will keep up your pluck, and that you deserve."

Father and child eagerly seized the gift. Little Honor was comforted and inspirited; but poor Pike's exhausted frame was set on fire by the potent spirit. It did not inspire him; on the contrary, it seemed to sever all the bonds of habitual restraint, and set free the anguish that had collected and frozen in his heart. He caught Mr. Threader's hand, and tried to speak; but his speech turned all to water, as it were, deep sobs burst from him, and overcome with emotion, he struck his breast fiercely, and uttered the most dismal lamentation.

"O, my poor boy! his poor great eyes staring so piteous; poor Honor a-trying to carry him, and forced to catch at the chimney to steady herself; and the little one, the youngest little one, that the sun's shining on there, and that will be cold under the sod so soon. And all day and night to be yearning for a morsel, and the childer crying through the cowl, though the cowl is only starvation. Ochone, ochone, the Lord is departed, and not a saint to listen!"

Mr. Threader was shocked. He got off his horse, and supporting Pike to the bank, made him sit down. There

his passion exhausted itself; and again by degrees there shone out of him "the sacred patience of the poor." But he was shaken by the outbreak of passion, and Mr. Threader would take his own way about accompanying him down the bank to the cabin.

In this time of trouble he had given his services as one of the committee for the distribution of assistance; and as the present case was evidently one which claimed whatever could be done for it, he readily took the opportunity of examining into the misery of the family, and relieving it as far as the funds intrusted to him might be so employed.

Pike had said truly that his boy was dying. He lay on the floor, with the heather from the hills under him, his cheeks flushed, his eyes half-open, his almost naked body showing every bone under the skin. The mother had resigned him; misery, sickness, and custom had quite trained her to suffer, and she sat on the low stool near him, supporting her aching head on the wall, and half-stupefied with fever.

The scene was one which Mr. Threader had witnessed over and over again for weeks past, and which he knew existed wherever he should turn his steps. He looked on it very differently from what he would have done, had one individual instance of such misery been seen by him in better times. He gave what the funds could afford without wronging other poor wretches, and he authorised Pike to make a claim upon the food distributed at the town, if, when he should apply, there was any food to be distributed. Thus were those who could eat in the family kept alive for that time also, and a little comfort of their hearts bestowed by the notice taken of their great woe.

The boy died; and wrapped round in the branches which had been his bed, was carried in his father's arms to lie in the trench dug by his father in the enclosure of turf and stones which surrounded the cabin. The mother meantime lay struggling with the fever; the fire of it, which was feeding on her life, gave her as yet a false strength. She went on from day to day, moaning and tossing on the fresh heather which her husband had brought from the mountain. He did not stay by and watch her; he went out in the morning to feed his goat, the only hope left. The little curly-haired girl, at five years old, was her mother's nurse; she brought water,—for the spring hard by glistened and whispered on through all that deadly season; she pushed together the branches of heather, all scattered by the poor woman's uneasy movements; and when she herself was sleepy, she lay down by her mother's side, her lips, healthy as yet, parting and inhaling the hot pestilential breath of the nearly unconscious woman. Pike came back in the evenings, sometimes with an ounce of oatmeal, begged or given, or a cup of broth; often with nothing but the milk of the goat, now sadly diminishing. When that was the case, he himself tasted no food whatever; and his hollow cheeks and sunken eyes told how famine preyed on his frame.

One night his wife, who had not spoken all day, called him in a clear sharp voice, as those do who, suddenly aroused from slumber, imitate the tone they would have had if perfectly awake.

"I'm going a journey, Pike," she said. "I've been sent for by a great lady; but if she spares me, I'll be back."

"Are ye going indeed, Honor honey? Honor, my darling," said Pike, "is it you are going?"

"I'll see you perhaps again. Isn't Johnny ready yet? He came first among us, ye know, Pike."

"And he's gone first; then ye, Honor honey, and little Honor no doubt next, and me. Ah, Honor, tell them as ye're going amongst not to forget me." Thus spoke Pike; and the tears gathered and ran down upon her parched face, but she hardly seemed conscious of them.

"Lewis is always a-watching," she began again. "When I am away, mind him; I see his face at the winder when we're both out—I seed him just—"

"No, no, darling," said Pike soothingly; "I'm not thinking that—don't trouble for Lewis."

"Ay, but he was here," said the little girl.

"The thief!" cried Pike. "And what did he want?"

"You, daddy," said the child. "He said Tike was dead and Tib was dead."

"Both!" cried Pike; but his attention was more fixed on the dying woman.

She wandered still, but mildly and less distinctly every minute. Her words came by ones and twos. The name of her dead boy, whose death they thought she had not noticed, occurred often, and once she bade the little girl be good, and held her lips to kiss her. The child stooped for the deadly kiss. "So, good bye, Pike," said she; "good night;" for indeed the shades were darkening over her eyes, and after another half-hour's perhaps unconscious struggle for breath, she lay at ease on the cold couch of the dead.

Pike sat by in silence. He was hungry and tired; there was a crust on the table, which he meant to have soaked in water for his wife; and now the child, the little Honor, having fallen asleep during the stillness of her mother's death-struggle, it remained for him. But, though hungry, he could not eat; though tired, he could not sleep. He sat and waked by the dead: it was the old custom in the oldest natural shape. Towards midnight he heard a tap at the window; and presently Lewis, pushing open the door, stole in, and came up to where Pike was sitting.

"She's gone, is she?" said Lewis, fixing his eyes on the dead body, over which the moonlight shone. "So are mine—all gone."

"I wish we were the same," said Pike.

"No, no—not I. Who knows what the dead knows?" said Lewis. "I would rather be here, provided I could get one morsel of Christian food."

"Christian food," said Pike; "is not all that is, Christian?"

Lewis did not answer; his gloomy eyes fixed themselves on the floor. After a silence, he looked up. "It's the blessed male I want to taste; I want the taste of the herb, the oatmeal agin."

"I care not if ye eat *that*," said Pike rather disdainfully. Lewis required no more bidding, but took the morsel, and ate it slowly, tasting it as he did so.

"My dead lies close by me," said he at last, "beside the big stone where the first phaties used to come. I did the best I could for 'em."

"I must do the same by mine," said Pike; "for I've not the strength left, no more than you, to take them to chapel. Come, neighbour, ye are restless like me the night; ye shall help me to open the earth and put her in. I brought her to a poor home, but I didn't think to carry her out to sich a last one."

Lewis silently assented, following his benefactor—for such he was—into the bit of ground where still the perished potato-stalks showed themselves, and with a broken pitchfork helped him to open a deep trench. They worked in silence. Both were feeble, and the drops of perspiration stood on their brows in the cold night air. When the space was large enough, they went together into the cabin, and bore the hapless mother from her hearth, no covering over her but the remains of the red petticoat, in which he had left her in the spring, when she had bade her husband farewell; and laying her down in mother-earth, heaped the clods over her. When they had done, Pike sank on his knees, and kneeling upright in the moonlight, prayed and wept aloud, mingling his wife's name with that of the saints.

Lewis stood beside in gloomy silence. "Ye've an aisy heart, Pike," said he, when the latter rose from prayer, and stood looking on the new-made grave.

Pike looked up. "It's the last convanience I may stand accused of," said he. "What mane you saying that?"

"Yer a good man," said Lewis, "and can pray near yer dead; for they can't cast nothing in yer teeth."

"Ah, neighbour, I understand you," said Pike. "Ye've not always been as tender as ye might; but ye see, tender or not, they all do but die. Mine are dead."

"I ate all from them," said Lewis, "and now I'm afraid of them."

"Art afraid?" cried Pike. "Mighty Father! speak a word man; say ye have not lifted yer hand—"

"By the powers, by the saints! have I never done any sich thing," said Lewis. "Father Humphrey knows it, like as I know it mine ownself. He come in, and held Tib in his arms to die, while Tikey lay dead. But they was starved—I ate all, Pike. Was that enough, or no?" and Lewis fixed his eyes on the ground in silence.

Pike also said nothing, but stood with the fork in his hand, leaning on it partly, and his eyes fixed on his neighbour. Many thoughts passed through his mind, but they all merged in one at last. "Lewis," he said, dropping the pitchfork, and going nearer to him with clasped hands, "I've got *one* left; and I've *one* way of saving her, maybe. O, by yer mother, Lewis, spare me the goat. How am I to watch the cratur now, how shall I keep the one drop o' milk, if yer will is to take the goat? I've gived you my own, and ye've tooked my own, and my mate's in yer mouth now, and welcome with it; therefore be a man, a human man, to me, and spare me the goat."

Lewis's heart was touched. Tears mingled with his words, as he took hold of his neighbour's hand. "I've been more villain nor man," said he; "but I won't be to you. I'll go away—I'll forget the look of her. Indeed, indeed, Pike, in my hunger I grow to be a dog—just a cur, that the nature of is to stale. If I'd been born a lord, and had my full of mate, I'd have been a good man."

"Even those lords have their trials," said Pike; "but, friend, *I*, that am sich a poor man, have been good to *thee*."

"And I shall think of it," cried Lewis; "and I'll do ye the best of kindness by taking myself clane away. Let me lie on yer floor till the morn's morn, and I'll trouble ye never more in this world."

"Lie down, if ye will," said Pike. "The morning's in the sky, and where shall we be in the eve?"

III.

The day which poor Pike saw breaking was one of those mild days of winter which can be found in no place like Ireland. Rain was far off; its heavy clouds gathered back in the horizon, and like a curtain rolled together, giving a sight of the pale blue sky overhead. Between the swellings of the ground on the bog were here and there little sheltered valleys, through the lowest part of which trickled a thread of water, and the sides were drained and dry. Here the sun shone through the mild damp air, collecting its warmth upon the steep slopes, and bringing out the fragrance of the earth; and here Pike and his little girl sat down the day after the mother's death, and their goat browsed among the tussocks before them. The child had followed her father up the bank; but as soon as they were seated, her eyes seemed to grow heavy, and though he woke her once or twice, she as often fell asleep again. He was glad of it. She did not feel hunger whilst she slept; and he sat by in inert repose collecting the sunbeams, and afraid to disturb the stillness that came over him. The little girl roused up once or twice, and went down to the brook to drink; came back, got close to her father, and again fell asleep.

When the evening came on, Pike roused her at last, and said they must go home. The child arose; but shivered so violently she could scarcely stand, and Pike laid hold of her. Alas, the burning skin, the parched lips, told him that the day's slumber had been but the first inroads of the fever! Before morning she was quite prostrate, sick as her brother and mother had been. Pike had believed that she would live; for no good reason, but he longed for this last tender life; and the human heart revolts from going over again the scenes of misery which it has just passed through. Yet she was there; on the same pallet with the same pain. He had no help either; he knew every cot was starving; and save he himself could aid her through, his darling must die.

He watched her continually: his few moments of relief were when he brought the goat to the spot where she lay, and there pressing the little supply of milk into the can, raised her head on one arm, and with the other hand held it to her lips, which gratefully received the comforting draught. This was done many times a-day; and the creature, growing familiar with the practice, would utter a low bleat when he gave the signal that she was wanted, and come of her own accord to yield her treasure, and offer her shaggy beard to Honor's thin fingers, if she was well enough to play with it. The only employment that took him away from the cabin was, to obtain a supply of food for the animal. He would fasten it within his door; and then going to the hill, tear up such herbs and grass as he could find, and return as hastily as was possible, fearing lest in that short absence something should be worse at home than when he left it. At the door he would pause an instant. The low bleat of the goat, acknowledging his return, was the first sound he heard; then he would hearken as he opened it for the sobbing breath of the little girl, dreading to hear that expression of pain, fearing still more the deadly stillness in which every hour it might be quenched. As yet, however, she struggled hard with the malady, and rewarded her patient father with signs of life more precious than the childless man knows how to believe.

It was nearly a week after the death of his wife, that he lay on the bare floor one midnight, stupefied by exhaustion, while the child dozed under the influence of the fever, half-conscious, on the few rags of the bed. The heat within her agitated her brain, so that it presented no clear image; a thousand phantoms hurried over it, and her low voice perpetually murmured sounds which, low as they were, yet were uttered with the exertion which would fain have made them loud. Pike's heavy slumber was unbroken by them; he had watched, he had given her the last drops of milk which he could collect as yet, and he lay silent and pale in a sleep that imitated death.

Presently, however, the child was aware that some one was standing at her side; it seemed to her that her father was in two places at once, *there* on the floor and *here* beside her. She thought there were candles in the hut; she thought the moonlight had lighted up candles, coming in as it suddenly did at the opened door. Then the figure went away from her; the father who was standing and awake stood by the father who was asleep. She spoke to it and said, or tried to say,

"Don't go from us, father;" for it seemed to her the soul of her father was stealing from the body.

But the standing figure did not move. There was a horror in its face which shot through the bewildered senses of little Honor; the staring open eyes were fixed on the prostrate figure, and terrified her weak consciousness; but at that moment, the father that lay on the floor groaned and stirred, and then the standing figure drew noiselessly back into the shadow. But Honor's consciousness was comforted by perceiving that the horror passed away from its face as the prostrate figure gave signs of life. Still she tried to call, to make a sound, to rise up; she stretched her hands to touch the shape that lay on the floor, and which she thought would rise and hold her in its arms, for she trembled; but when she did so, the other shape swiftly and silently rushed up to her, and, with threatening gestures and strange distorted face, terrified her to silence and inaction. Her pulse throbbed till there came a dizziness over her brain, in which twenty figures seemed to be threatening and grinning, and then to go reeling about the room. She heard a faint murmuring sound which made the goat's bleat come into her mind; there was a struggle going on; a heavy body seemed dragged about by those reeling figures. One of them seemed to pass out of the door, and the rest vanished at the same time, leaving her father alone on the floor, on whom her dizzy eyes fixed themselves in anxious uncertainty and dread, till the nightmare-spell was dissolved, when he awoke and raised himself.

It was now daylight; and he came first to the side of the child, whose wandering words and beating pulses he tried to soothe with kind fond words.

"Jewel! is she bether? Hush, darling! what is it she's saying? Was I dead, was I angry? What's that all? Hush, hush! she shall have poor Nanny's comfort." And he turned to the dark corner where poor Nanny's bed of leaves was made; and there—unbelieved was the blank darkness at first—the goat was gone.

In vain was every corner searched, in vain the broken enclosure, in vain the hill-side; despair had never filled up his heart till now; and the gasping lips of his child, which he had used to wet with the precious milk, raised into fury the untamed passion of his heart. He seized a stone—a huge stone—which lay by his door, and uttering an imprecation and the name of Lewis in one, rushed with weak strength across the moor.

Lewis had not been seen in the country since the night they parted by Honor's grave; but Pike felt in his heart that there was none but he by whom this cruel deed could have been done; and, in fact, when he approached the cabin, Lewis was seen sitting on a heap of earth a little way from his own door. When he saw Pike running towards him, he also rose and rushed on the angry man, eluding the stone which was hurled at him, and with little difficulty bore his weak adversary to the earth. When down, however, there seemed no anger kindled at his attack; he let him rise again, and hanging his fingers as it were on his own collar-bones, stood looking him in the face with a dogged persisting look. Pike was confounded.

"Why don't you kill me at once?" said Pike. "If ye did not do it, ye've a right to kill me, for I would have killed ye; and if ye *did* steal her away, best, best kill me, not to see Honor die."

"Do it, ye say?" asked Lewis. "Do what, neighbour?"

"Ye know, ye know," said Pike. "What is it but one thing?—the goat, the life of *her*!"

"Ye shall have lost your goat?" said Lewis composedly. "Shure, and have ye jist looked every where?"

"D'ye think I've got to be reminded to look for her?" said Pike. "I believe it's yourself; man, man," cried he, falling on his knees, "I pray to you give me the creetur: the strength's gone by; I've none to fight for her."

"And is not it myself wishes I had her?" said Lewis. "If ye doubt, jist set your feet inside the hut, and see if morseel be there, or has been these Sundays past."

"And it's I'll do it," said Pike, turning away, and eagerly entering the wretched cabin.

All was bare; no spark of fire, no remains of household stuff, no broken cup, no half-bowl. Pike went outside, and searched every where for the appearance of blood where the animal might have been killed—for hair, for any thing suspicious. But he found nothing; the ground was disturbed in one place, but that was beside the bit of rock where early potatoes used to come; and Pike remembered that the children were buried there.

"Neighbour," said he, "it's *not* you. O Lewis, had ye one little cratur left, ye could overlook my raving! She must die now, like poor Tike and Tibby have done."

"Never mind them," said Lewis; "we must all die one day."

"Never mind yer childer!" cried Pike; "and indeed to see the way the earth's scarce put down upon them, it might be said you minded little."

"Mind you less," said Lewis, pushing him away from the rough untidy ground under which he had said the bodies lay. "In these times there's but one thing we've need to think of—food, food, that's all; I *must* live."

"Where's the *must* to live?" said Pike. "That cruel villain that lives by stealing little Honor's goat had oughted to die far sooner, or he'll know the worse in yonder world."

Lewis answered nothing; he turned off with a sneer; but Pike took no notice of that, or any thing but his loss, and returned broken-hearted to his desolate cabin.

Hope now was over; nothing was to be done all the long day but watch and wait the fluttering life, which still was life, and while it lasted seemed as if it might have been saved from death. We all know the efforts we make to do *that*; how hoarded money is lavished; how there is no prudence thought of, no obstacles attended to: aid for the sick, though it be but imaginary aid, becomes an absolute necessity of our existence, or seems so; for there are thousands to whom it is such an impossibility as it is to the blind to see, or the old to be young. It was so impossible to Pike that he did not think of it; he thought only of the means he had yesterday, and had been deprived of to-day.

The winter sun shone in that day through the open space made for a window; the winter blast, too, made itself felt; and towards evening little Honor, who had not spoken for several hours, uttered a complaint of the cold. The father had sat all day in the dull despair which patience itself in untaught minds becomes. He had sunk this time into a half-slumber; but he rose and took her in his arms, and with what warmth remained in his thin frame, once more cherished the vital flame of his darling. The time for help was gone by. The world's wealth at that time could not have turned back the spirit of life which was slowly leaving its human dwelling-place; the little hands, though cherished in his bosom, froze by degrees; the lips, though he tenderly blew upon them, grew whiter and stiffer; a little froth gathered on the mouth, the father gently wiped it away with his torn sleeve; the golden curls were still the same as they had been in health, except that the scattered hairs were matted to the forehead by the dew that gathered there; he lifted them up softly, and shook his head.

It was now the evening, and every thing within the cabin grew dusky and indistinct. All was still also, except the breathing, which became slower and more laborious. It was the last time,—the time so sacred by the bedside of the rich, the time of such respectful silence.

But at the poor man's door there came the hasty sound of horses' feet, and then the rider's knock repeated, when it was not at first answered. The haggard man, carrying in his arms the dying child, obeyed the call, and undid the door. Mr. Threader stood without; he started at the ghastly faces and figures that met his eye as the door unclosed.

He uttered a low exclamation; and hanging his horse to the post, entered softly, saying, "I would not have disturbed you. Alas, this is a sad sight!"

Pike sat down again, answering nothing.

"She's gone almost," said Mr. Threader; "there's no help for *her*. But for you—"

"Be silent," said Pike. "Let her die." The spirit within him was worn out, and the further he was from human help the more out of sight was respect for human distinction.

The Englishman stood by compassionately. It was not for long; the breath had almost ceased to labour, the teeth no longer touched, and the cheeks had fallen in where the teeth parted; there was no more struggle, scarce any panting now; the body was clay, the spirit passed; all that had been Pike's child was gone, except the withered discoloured case.

When he saw how it was, he laid the body down on the wretched pallet; and throwing himself beside it, gave way to ungoverned sorrow. Mr. Threader was astonished, for he had seen his patience when first death visited his house. He tried to comfort him.

"Ay, but it's the last," said Pike; "and I'm weaker, and *this* might have lived;" and the passion of grief shook his gaunt frame almost to dissolution.

Mr. Threader had come to the cabin partly with the purpose of bringing to it, as well as to others, a portion of relief; and he now, cautiously remembering the effect of the over-potent draught he had last given, prevailed on the starving man to take some portion of nourishment. He ate; and like the Egyptian, his spirit came again; and though it seemed to grow stronger only to suffer, still the embers of life were at least rekindled.

Mr. Threader promised that the body of the child should be interred in Christian ground, and then went on: "I'm sorry to disturb you just at this moment; but the business I partly came upon is to lay hold of a culprit who has been robbing the whole neighbourhood. I've heard that you may perhaps help me. What are your neighbours here?"

"Most that were neighbours are dead," said Pike.

"But some remain, I suppose; for instance, here's the name of Lewis Callaghan."

"He was alive yesterday," said Pike.

"Is he a good neighbour to you?" asked Mr. Threader.

"I've no harm to say of him," answered Pike.

"Any good?"

"Very like," said Pike; "I'm unfit to judge since all my trouble; and I did him a wrong, thinking him to have stolen the goat."

"That's the very story," said Mr. Threader. "It was your goat, then?"

"What was mine?" said Pike, hopelessly and without interest.

"Well, there's been a strange story brought to me about the robbery of a goat, and many other things. I wish, Pike, if you've lost one, you could come with me for half an hour. I'd give a guinea to catch that fellow."

"Yesterday, would not I have died to have cotedched whoever laid hands on her; but I care not now," said Pike, folding his arms. However, a request was enough to make him obey; and hanging his head, and laying his arms over his breast, he patiently went where Mr. Threader led him.

Mr. Threader had been roused that evening by a report of crimes committed; and when he came over with help among the cabins, he had at the same time taken measures to inquire into it. Lewis was the man accused; during his absence from his own cabin he was supposed to have been the perpetrator of a number of robberies, in none of which, however, he had been actually caught; but respecting one, there was evidence likely to commit him, supposing the owner could identify the remains of the animal whose hide he had been seen burying. Pike's robbery had been heard of; and it was conjectured that his loss and Lewis's crime might be found to relate to the same object.

When Pike entered the cabin, Lewis was standing at the other end, his face averted and his exit prevented by a man whom Mr. Threader had left as guard till he should himself return. He perceived his neighbour come in, and after a moment's doubt turned full upon him, and said:

"So ye're not yet contint, though yourself searched for yourself; ye are for making me guilty, though ye know the clane contrary."

"Is it mysell knows or cares?" said Pike. "Honor's dead."

"'Twas not the goat," exclaimed Lewis; quickly checking himself, however, when he had uttered half the last word; then he added in an artificial tone, "Arrah, neighbour, but I'm consarned to hear that news."

Pike took no notice of either part of what he said; but Mr. Threader was convinced by the first that the suspicions as to the theft were correct; and telling him what he was accused of, ordered a search to be made.

"And it is a credible story entirely," said Lewis, looking round the small bare cabin, with a look and tone of contempt, "that a big carcass will be here hidden, and jintlemen's eyes not see it."

"Suppose ye," said one of the men who had come in with Mr. Threader,—"jist ye suppose it might not be inside the walls we are going to sarch."

"And what's outside, save nothing at all at all?" said Lewis; "not a phatie-stalk even to hide as big's a mouse, let alone goats, which is bigger."

"Then what was yer hands a-tearing up earth for at the skriek of day, two morns since, and putting in bigger nor mice?" said the man.

"I was *not* doing so," said Lewis.

But heedless of this denial, they moved into what had been the garden, leading Pike with them; and Lewis, who, though watched, was at liberty, following at a little distance. He trembled while he did so, but kept silence during the time they went round the enclosure; for the man who said he had seen Lewis employed in moving the earth could not identify the exact spot. They observed that the ground was disturbed near the rock; but the man felt certain it was not there that he had seen Lewis; and they left it to examine other parts, but saw no evidence elsewhere that it had been moved.

It was now quite dark, and they were making their search by the light of lanterns. Pike's interest was gone; his thoughts were all in the cabin where he had left his dead child. But presently he felt his arm grasped, and heard a tremulous voice in his ear, Lewis himself having drawn close up to him; and while he held Pike with one hand, he pointed to the searchers with the other.

"Neighbour, stop them; they will turn up that awful ground. But you know what's there; I always told you it was my dead."

"I can't hinder them," said Pike.

Lewis watched them, and, in fact, after a few moments' consultation, they determined, as they could find nothing elsewhere, to search the stony ground where Pike knew the children were buried, though the man who had watched still persisted it was not there he had seen Lewis at work. But with the first stroke on that ground Lewis gave way. He could not bear it. "'Tis not there," he cried aloud; "you shall not break that earth at night. The dead will appear. Hold, hold!" And finding they did not heed him, he flung himself on the ground, crying, "I did it, if ye must wrench it forth; ye need not look there. I tell you 'tis here." He pointed to what seemed a piece of solid rock at some little distance from the spot where the children lay; and rolling it over, he pushed away the earth under it, and uncovered part of a shaggy hide.

Mr. Threader and the rest had run up when they saw what he was doing.

"Is it yours, Pike? Look at it," said one of the men, pulling it out from the earth; for Lewis had quitted his labour as soon as they left the grave.

In very truth there it was—the skin of the goat; the spots and marks Pike knew so well, the brown and white hairs, which Honor had so often twisted together. Dead as his feelings had become, they were all roused by this sight. He burst forth upon Lewis with a storm of indignation before which the wretch shrank as if the words had been thunderbolts. All that Lewis answered was, "I did it for life."

"And starving's better nor life," said Pike, "if life's so dear as you paid down for it. Murderer—the sweet soul's murderer."

"Ye may think life's little worth and say so, but not I," said Lewis. "Pike," said he, coming close to him, "I dare not die. Hear me. Ye *shall*; and none else shall hear; nor see neither," he added, glancing back at the children's grave. Then he went on, his voice lowering at every word: "A thing is on my soul, let alone the goat." And here he put his mouth upon Pike's ear, and his two hands, one on each side, so as to shut out the sound of his words from every creature else.

Pike heard, and his passion subsided in an instant; his hands fell by his side; the excited colour faded utterly from his face; he staggered back two paces, and murmured, "I forgive him; he's a more miserable wretch nor I."

"I did it for life," repeated Lewis, in a scarce audible voice.

There was a silence all about them; for every one was trying to make out what was passing; watching their gestures, catching at every sound. Mr. Threader was the first to speak.



OLIVIA AND THE SQUIRE [VICAR OF WAKEFIELD]. BY J. ABSOLON.

"This is not the time to make further inquiries," said he. "Enough is known to prosecute this fellow, and I shall take care it is done. Take him away. But you, kind-hearted Pike, you must live too. I've had the means furnished me of sending a few of you across the Atlantic. You shall have ten pounds—do you hear me, Pike?—five to take you over, and five to set you going when you get there."

"I thank your honour," said Pike languidly.

"You shall go to America, you know," said Mr. Threader.

"Have not you heard of America?" he added, trying to rouse him.

"Yes, yes; we often talked of migrating," said Pike, "when there was *we* in the cabin."

"I can't bring *them* back; would I could, Pike," said Mr. Threader compassionately. "But take comfort; *you*, at least, shall go; *you* shall yet live and prosper."

"Thank you, sir," said Pike feebly; "blessings be on you!" And then getting into the conventional tone, he added in an unmeaning voice: "Hunder thousan blessings on yer honour; and may you never"—and now real natural feelings sprang up, and he took Mr. Threader's hand in both his—"and may you never know what it is to see your own childer die of hunger!"

The National Magazine.

[The Editors of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE cannot return unavailable Papers, except in cases where it may seem desirable to communicate with the writers.]

It was said in the *Times* that at the Agricultural Exhibition in Paris of the past year the English peasant appeared in person, in manner, and in dress, the poorest-looking man of his class in Europe. We were, of course, inclined to treat the assertion as an abominable slander, and to deny every word of it. For all that, however, the statement has an awkward trick of rising up, confronting us, and defying us to disprove it.

Village-greens are being enclosed; rural sports are passing away; education is very very low; wages are low; there is more than enough *koô-tooing* to dignities; and too little manly independence,—for how can a poorly paid, hard-worked, ill-clad, ill-fed, untaught man hold up his head independently? Morally, he is a *serf*. He cannot be bought or sold, it is true; but he is bound down and fenced about by an incapacity as strong as prison-bars. He contains the

undeveloped elements of a man, while he toils as a machine. Hands to labour he has, and they are the only part of his organisation which has ample play; his mind lies fallow, his heart, his soul,—God only knows the mysteries of their working! We have often wondered what are the thoughts in the minds of these poor fellows as they tramp at the plough-tail, or gather in the harvest they have sown, but of which they eat so scantily. It is a relief to us to turn from these hard-worked realities to an estate which we possess in Utopia.

Our estate in that happy region comprises many thousands of acres—meadow, moor, corn-land, forest, marsh, and glistening streams; and it maintains some hundreds of men, women, and children. The wild creatures are as free to them as to ourselves; they prey on their little holdings, and ought to redeem the tax they levy. The fish in the river are free to them also. (We cannot quite understand why, even out of Utopia, the flowing rivers and the great sea should be held as individual property.) In our village there is a spacious green, or common, which we shall never enclose as a market-garden for a rental of five pounds. On the summer evenings it is merry with the voices of young men and maidens, old men and children; there obsolete sports and games go on till twilight; there the training of rural militia takes place; there the annual feast is held; there the poor man's donkey can browse, and the poor man's sickly child sit under the broad shadow of the green elms. At one side of this green is a spacious room—school by day, library and reading-room by night. A fair education can be had there free: it is a government school. The children attend it until they are fourteen years old. We hold that the great instrument to raise men in their stations is education, religious and secular; and till they get it, they will look poor, melancholy, and degraded. There is nothing that gives men a feeling of such true and honest self-respect as minds disenthralled of ignorance, and rising to the level for which God has given them capability. It is the dull consciousness of something starved within him that gives the downcast look to the peasant's countenance. Improve the race morally, and it will improve physically also. In support of this, I will instance the improvement education is working, and has worked, in the *physique* of other classes. What a coarse race in appearance, to judge from still extant portraits, were the country squires of a century ago; and what sweet minds and manners many of them had, and not they only—kings, queens, and "polite people," "the quality," would bear a poor comparison with many a citizen and a citizen's wife of now-a-days! In perusing the annals of courts scarcely a hundred years back, vulgar people may be thankful who know nothing about their great grandfathers and grandmothers; for then, at least, there is no need to blush for them, and there is room for a doubt whether such progenitors may not have been as decent as they were obscure. Now, if education and improved taste have raised nobility out of its slough of grossness,—if education has so far refined the middle classes that they severely gall the kibe of courtiers,—why cannot the hard-handed children of labour profit by the graduated scale of progress, and rise too? In our Utopian property the peasantry have been taught, and well taught; every man and woman amongst them can read, write, and cipher; they have had good maps of their own country, and other countries too, before their eyes on the school-walls, and have profited thereby to a considerable extent. History, both sacred and profane, has been offered to them; social and religious truths have been inculcated, and by one means and another the scales have fallen from their mental eyes. Knowledge has given them more self-confidence than an untaught clown can have; they bear themselves freely; there is nothing of that slouching, under-looking, reluctant courtesy to superiors, which stamps many rustics with an air of stolid malignity, or shrinking bashfulness, as if in the presence of the squire they saw an enemy or a despot.

They work the better for having an intellect awakened;

the head guides the hands. In times of unavoidable distress they are not like mere broken machines; they can devise expedients to help them through the evil day, which no illiterate boor can do. Self-respect is a better guardian than law; but the law that acts amongst them best is the law of public opinion. The whole moral tone of the class is elevated; they are not drudges merely, not so many mere hands to sow and reap that others may eat. Enjoyment, relaxation, ultimate rest from toil, are theirs. On the village-green may be heard, on summer nights, the strains of the band of rural musicians. There is the village flower-show, and due distribution of prizes to the cottage gardeners. Every tenant on our estate has a neat home and sufficient garden about it to grow a portion of his family's subsistence, besides a piece of land in the allotment field.

The wages are better than any body gets out of Utopia; but then we, the owners or stewards of these thousands of acres, are amply content with very moderate interest on the value of the land leased to our tenants, and with still less upon that of the simple cotters; thus, with providence and industry, a man may hope to rest from his hard labours before "the keepers of the house tremble, and the grasshopper becomes a burden;" in short, a time of independence and rest may be attained to by all who merit it, except in those isolated cases of trial, loss, and misfortune, of which every community will produce examples enough to keep alive human charity. We have less, our tenants have more; and thus the whole is fairly balanced, and every body in Utopia is content.

The minister of our parish is known to his people as the director and promoter of their temporal as well as spiritual good: he awards the prizes at the flower-shows, is an encourager of all manly sports, is president of the school and library, friend and adviser and comforter to all in distress, and general court of appeal in difficulty and disagreement,—a wise, honest, God-fearing man; and, what a good priest always is, the best-beloved and chief man in the place. It is very pleasant to walk about the village on festival-days—the cottages so fresh and clean; the gardeners so bright and healthy; the green covered with holiday-folks, less rough and far more hearty in their civility to their superiors or masters than they are out of Utopia; children loud-voiced, rosy, large—not pined and stunted with insufficiency of food; and every body in spirits and enjoyment, free from the black shadow of to-morrow's poverty; happy themselves, and unenvious of those whom the Creator of ranks and orders of men has placed above them. They are raised in their station, but they are not lifted out of it. This is only in Utopia, in foolish dream-land!

Elsewhere I have seen wretched cabins,—property of men of thousands a-year,—cabins not fit to house a dog;—we wondered the very owners did not pull them down as eyesores, and build better. The British peasant is of good *pâte* (are not our soldiers the pick of the peasantry?); but he is born in poverty, bred in poverty, nurtured in ignorance, and left to grovel in it his life through; therefore his countenance is mean and mournful, his figure is bent and slouching, his manner is that of a poor overtaken serf rather than of a free man; and in the sight of Europe he is a satire on the vaunted wealth, charity, and liberal government of his country.

In my lifetime I have seen a good many plump squires and ladies, some very plump farmers and traders; but I scarcely ever saw a plump labourer—scarcely one middle-aged man who did not look too small for his clothes, and of a spare worn countenance. Other people may have been more fortunate in this respect; but generally speaking, the race is capable of much improvement in the matter of feeding, so far as I have observed. As children, they have been insufficiently fed and clad, and put to work too early; and the result is, what has been exhibited in Paris in company with fat cattle. Might it not be well if some of those noble lords and gentlemen who give such ardent interest to the producing of superlative beef would turn their ambition to

improving the peasantry? I am persuaded that the speculation, though it seems so little profitable, would prove a glorious mine to any who may work it, and that prizes would turn up, at least as valuable as those gained by ponderous swine.



TO THE AUTHORESS OF "AURORA LEIGH."

A SONNET BY SYDNEY DOBELL.

WERE Shakspeare born a twin, his lunar twin—
Not of the golden but the silver bow—
Should be like thee. So, with such eyes and brow,
Sweeten his looks; so, with her dear sex in
His voice,—a king's words writ out by the queen,—
Unman his bearded English, and, with flow
Of breastfull robes about her female snow,
Present the lordly brother. Oh Last-of-kin,
There be ambitious women here on earth
Who will not thank thee to have sung so well!
Apollo and Diana are one birth,
Pollux and Helen break a single shell.
Who now may hope? While Adam was alone
Eve was to come. She came, God's work was done.

LIFE IN CHEAP LODGINGS.

LIFE in the large manufacturing city in which I dwell has many different aspects. Ephraim Hardcash, Esq., who rides in his handsome well-hung carriage from a spacious and well-appointed mansion in the suburbs to a palatial warehouse, teeming like a fair with almost every thing marketable, has a different look-out from Jem Ancoats, fustian-coated, cotton-flaked, and oily, in whose idea of rural scenery houses a-building and cindery footpaths are constant elements. What life is to these I can only guess at. Seeing that Ephraim Hardcash, Esq. is sleek, portly, and complacent, I infer that his life is pleasant. As I once saw him enter his mansion, closing the door behind him with a bang, I caught a glimpse of a stately matron in purple velvet; so I infer that it is likewise connubial. Of Jem Ancoats' life I infer from Jem's demeanour, which is generally a blending of exhaustion and doggedness, that it is not altogether a healthy one. I see Jem in the fields sometimes with "a lass," and charitably hope that if his life is not connubial at present, it will shortly become so. And from seeing Jem's excitement on a certain canine Derby-day, and the ardour with which he backed the favourite, by the name of "Mikil's Dog," I infer that even his life has its *agrémens*. But the life which I *know* is something different from both of these. It is the life of the lonely bachelor in lodgings,—of the clerk, the warehouseman, the teacher of languages,—the life of many thousands. For a short term of years, as a chrysalis-state certain to unfold into the fluttering delights of family life, this sort of existence may be endurable,—nay, even pleasurable; but I say, in the words of Paracelsus,

"If this be all,
And other life await us not, for one
I say 'tis a poor cheat."

I may be bitter—indeed, I know I am; but if these lines should meet the eye of her with whom I danced at the last Parthenon ball (tickets five shillings; ladies three-and-six), she will understand the root of my bitterness. I will just explain enough to account for, if not to excuse, the somewhat querulous tone in which I am aware I write.

In the Milton Road, just opposite the cab-stand, there is a stationer's shop, which is also a circulating-library. It is just like other shops of its class. Its window contains the usual amount of packages of extra-superfine double-laid

cream note-paper and periodical literature; and in the early spring breaks out into the usual blossom of valentines, of the boisterously offensive sort, representing very rubicund cooks brandishing saucepans, or old gentlemen in blue coats, drab breeches, white stockings, and pigtales; and of the serious and sentimental sort, on white satin with real solid metal spangles, and verse at once touching and business-like:

"A constant heart I bear, and true,
And feelings warm as usual;
I really shall expect from you,
My love, the first refusal."

But if the shrine was but ordinary, how rare was the goddess! O, dimpled rosy little librarian, how much you have to answer for!—for the hungry foreigner's threepence, expended nominally upon *The Coming Struggle*, but really that he might obtain a fuller survey of you, whose chestnut curls he had got a glimpse of through the window; for the shilling of the young warehouseman, ambitious to shine in your blue eyes by the purchase of cheap treatises on abstract science, astonishingly clear in the first page, and unintelligible in the second without a knowledge of the Differential Calculus; for the useless hiring (for had we not read and re-read them?) by self and another gent of the *Pilgrims of the Rhine* and Thackeray's *Edmund*,—for so you most musically pronounced them; for profuse and reckless cab-fares; for Parthenon ball-tickets; for awakened hopes of leaving, and increased disgust at continuing, my solitary life in lodgings. O, the fatal evening when we gents, returning from the city, and beginning to revive in the fresher air and quiet of the suburbs, learnt with dismay that you had married a thriving salesman, and would never more sit behind the little red curtain, protective from admiring glance of passing butcher-boy! O, the dreary Milton Road, perambulated by tall policemen, unrelieved throughout its weary length by the prospect of a cheerful word or smile from you! O gents, O my brothers, the snowiest shirt-front may conceal an aching bosom, and the stiffest of all-rounders encircle a throat that has many a bitter pill to swallow!

Lodgings there are, I know, even in this city of my desolation, comfortable enough for the most fastidious bachelor,—quiet, airy, thick-walled rooms, with recesses for book-shelves, and depths of cool shade in the hottest weather—rooms in which a student may read and a Sybarite repose. But these are not for me to dwell in or to dwell on. I leave them to the unfortunate younger brothers of fashionable novels, stoically supporting existence on eight hundred a-year. Lodgers there are, too, with tranquillity proof against the annoyances of any lodgings; fellows of bovine health and iron nerves, who take possession of their apartments like conquerors, and test the resources of the establishment the very first evening of their arrival by entertaining a few friends, who sing and play the bugle, and two of whom stop to breakfast; or men with minds so concentrated on some abstract study as to be insensible to concrete discomforts. But I am blest with neither the overriding animal spirits of the former, nor the lofty insensibility of the latter. I am neither Bob Sawyer nor Isaac Newton. Life is to me neither an uproarious picnic nor a wrapt meditation. I am not superior to circumstances. I am very much acted on by my environment. I do not expect luxurious elegance; but I do complain of cheap and pretentious inconvenience. Why should every twopenny-halfpenny row of houses be stuccoed and glazed into absurd imitation of its betters? Why should one side of my little room be taken up by a great ill-fitting plate-glass window, exposing me to the pitiless rays of the afternoon-sun and the derision of street-boys? What comfort is there in these colossal knobs of earthenware screwed into door and shutter? Now-a-days a piece of plain, honest, unsophisticated, good old English wood dares not show its face in the humblest dwelling, but it must be painted, varnished, marbled, veined, stained, grained, or somehow hypocritically disguised. Tidiness before tawdri-

ness, bareness before *bad* ornament, is what I sigh for in cheap lodgings. To attain it, as far as rests with me, my first care on taking fresh rooms is to make a clean sweep of all shepherds and shepherdesses, all small marble peep-shows that work with a click, and strike the looker-in with dizziness; all hideous little green china-teapots (of great value); all wax fruit and flowers; all "presents for Mary Ann;" all moth-eaten, one-eyed, stuffed birds, frightfully off their legs; and, as I am not a conchologist, and object to those very prickly shells as dangerous, and to those rich brown smooth speckled ones as nauseous, "I'll thank you, Mrs.—Mrs.—" "Awkins, sir." "Yes; I'll thank you, Mrs. Hawkins, to remove them also." "You'll let them picters bide, sir?" "Why, no, I think not. That lady in the lace-cap and blue-satin dress is yourself, of course—I should have known it any where; and that good-looking gentleman is Mr. Hawkins,—a speaking likeness I have no doubt, and very handsome pictures both; but I do not like pictures. (Art, forgive thy worshipper; Truth, thy votary!) That engraving of the Rev. Noah Walker you would naturally prefer to have in your own room; and, let me see, what's this? The Great Exhibition? No. I see; a lithographic view of an entertainment given to the workmen of Messrs. Horrocks and Jorrocks on occasion of the coming-of-age of Ralph Horrocks, jun. Esq., when upwards of four hundred sat down to a warm and sumptuous dinner. You *may* take that down as well."

There is always a Mr. Hawkins; but though he uncords your boxes, fetches your cabs, cleans your boots, and—Mrs. H.'s education having been neglected—casts up your weekly bills, you never see him. His entrance into and his exit from his own castle is by the postern. He leads a back-kitchen and knife-house sort of life. You hear a dull heavy chopping sound at a distance, and suppose he is amongst the coals. You guess his whereabouts by a subdued grumbling or a smell of strong tobacco, which occasionally ascends from the lower regions; till at length, one night, you are startled by the apparition of a man in shirt-sleeves and without his shoes creeping stealthily upstairs. The thought strikes you that it is a burglar; but you check yourself—that is Mr. Hawkins going to bed.

I am by no means an epicure, and have rather a dislike to "warm and sumptuous" dinners; but I like a meal of meat and vegetables tolerably cooked once a-day. Yet even this modest requirement is, in my experience, unattainable in cheap lodgings. The various wholesome and nutritious products of the garden which I see in the greengrocers' shops are forbidden fruit to me. If they require a little extra attention, an impassable barrier excludes them from my table. I am doomed to the everlasting potato, in a state of watery mash or stony hardness.

O, those mockeries of mutton-chops, those leathery beef-steaks, insoluble by any gastric energies save those of a fowl's gizzard! Do I dream, or was there in my childhood such a dish as boiled-beef with accompaniment of soft and delicious carrots? Perhaps pleasure in eating is a feeling peculiar to childhood, like the love of buttercups and daisies; and pain is the normal affection of the mature mind with reference to its meals. In my first revolt against the dreadful oppression of these dinners, I abolished, instead of endeavouring to reform, the system under which I suffered. I treated the custom of dining as an irrational and antiquated practice, kept up only by timid and conventional people. I ceased to dine. For a few days I exulted in my freedom. I felt an ascetic self-complacency; but I was soon convinced by unmistakable signs that, like most violent radicals, I had gone too far. Reaction set in. I began to think that, after all, our ancestors knew what they were about when they set up the institution of dining, and that I would resume it, at all events provisionally, until the discovery of something better. But as the dread of Mrs. Hawkins's cookery was still strong upon me, I took to living like a mariner on a North-Polar expedition. I procured certain soldered tin-cases, which would open only by the use of powerful levers,

and contained concentrated soups and meats of such essential strength, if the advertisement said true, that I was once horrified to find by accurate calculation that I had just consumed for one dinner as good as sixteen pounds of animal food. I fancied that my manners, in spite of my acquaintance with the ingenuous arts, were becoming fierce. I had a secret dread of cannibalism. One day, after long fasting, I caught myself looking at my friend Lovesy, who is plump and rosy in an esculent point of view. He observed it, and grew cooler towards me. I would not lose my friend, so I abandoned the tin-cases. Then, though quite as averse as Jean Jacques to *la gêne de la bonne compagnie et la crapule du cabaret*, I tried Overdone's Universal Commercial Dining-Rooms. Every thing looked satisfactory,—baskets of bread, ample platefuls of meat, sufficient portions of tart. But the palate soon became aware that the viands had been prepared in some wholesale and summary manner. That meat was tender, but with a sodden and unnatural tenderness. The joint from which it came had been subjected to the influences of some powerful machinery. It had been educated along with dozens of its fellows by some wholesale and indiscriminating process, instead of having its individual character studied, and its peculiar excellences fostered by the judicious basting of a private cook. That tart, too; its fruit was too fruity and its paste too pasty. They had evidently met for the first time upon that plate. Where was that delightful intermediate substance, neither paste nor fruit, but partaking of the qualities of both, and better than either, offspring of warm and oven-born union, which I remember in the pies of other days? No good thing comes of crude and hasty alliances.

Candide, we are told, "found life most tolerable after meals." But then he did not know what it is to spend an afternoon in cheap lodgings after a dinner cooked by Overdone or Mrs. Hawkins. The afternoon, under all circumstances, is the most tedious part of the twenty-four hours. It is the dull, unbelieving, disenchanted middle-life of the day. You shrug your shoulders more frequently than is your custom. You begin to think you expressed your feelings rather too warmly in that letter which you wrote last night and posted this morning. But when to the natural influences of the time, and the miseries of a resentful digestive apparatus, are added the outcries of an importunate rag and bone merchant, painfully audible through the whole of his course down the street; a lugubrious barrel-organ playing deadly-lively tunes under your window; a chattering, stamping, shuffling nigger, with no more humour in him than a pulverised mummy-cloth; the squalling of two babies brought by a colony of children on your door-step, who have evidently come to stay, and have brought their bread-and-treacle with them; and through, and above all, that woman, who sings in a cracked, shrill, and yet pathetic voice, suggestive of other and severer ills of life—Well, I will write no more of mine.

DALTON, AND HISTORY OF THE ATOMIC THEORY.*

THEORETICAL, and practical, are two expressions by which the world seeks to discriminate between two antithetic phases of human knowledge—two opposite characteristics of mental energy. The phases themselves are well marked; they are mentally recognisable to all who, bringing adequate power of analysis to the task, contemplate the steps by which the triumphs of mind over matter, and material laws, are effected. But though mental discrimination between the two antithetic phases be readily conceivable, the words employed to embody the conception are devoid of the clearness which a logician desires; nor are they free from the charge of leading the public mind astray,

* *Dalton, and History of the Atomic Theory.* By Dr. R. ANGUS SMITH. London: Baillière.

and committing an injustice to the so-called "abstract worker," or "theoretical man."

We doubt whether in the whole range of mathematical and physical science there be such an entity as a purely abstract truth; that is to say, a truth which could not find some practical application, if man only knew how to apply it. The time for such application may not come in a life, in a century—it may never come; still the truth may not necessarily be an abstraction. The laws of the properties of conic sections were not altered by the discovery of ships, and the necessity for navigating them which arose. Yet these laws were numbered in the category of so-called abstract truths, until they found a practical aim in the science of navigation. The discovery that we do not see the heavenly bodies in their true positions—in other words, the discovery of the aberration of light—was a so-called abstract truth, until it found its application in confirming what had already been adduced through other channels concerning the velocity of light. Oersted's discovery, again, of the law of magnetic deflection by an electric current was of the nature of abstract truth, until it found its application in the telegraph of Cooke and Wheatstone. And thus might we proceed in our citations of examples of so-called abstract truth made practical throughout the records of every physical science; giving weight at every step to the hypothesis which denies the existence of any such entity as an abstract truth.

Such is our faith; and entertaining it, we award all honour to the so-called worker-out of abstractions, the so-called theorist, ay, if the term must needs be used,—the unpractical man. Honour to him who reveres the pure spirit of truth for itself alone, because it is truthful; not for its immediate applications and the money it will bring. Nor let this be unjustly construed into a disparagement of the labours and a depreciation of the services of practical men. Both qualities are necessary to the development of human progress; that progress would be checked in its career by the destruction of either. A watch, as a keeper of time, would be no less destroyed by the annihilation of watch-mainsprings than by the destruction of mainspring-makers. Still the contingencies would differ in importance; and the case affords an apt illustration of the comparative rank of the men who discover laws or forces, and those who merely apply them.

In its essence, there is something unselfish in the prosecution of truth for its own sake; and amongst the workers of whom this attribute is typical, the records of all countries demonstrate how ill-requited the noble sentiment has been. The self-dependent principle, which lies at the foundation of England's political greatness, renders our system obnoxious to the tendency of giving an undue advantage to the mere utiliser of discovered truths. He who is fortunate enough to apply a truth second-hand to the improvement of some technical process subservient to the wants of man has seldom just reason to complain; he can obtain in England, better perhaps than elsewhere, the solid recompense he seeks. Far otherwise is it with the theorist, the man of original conceptions; the man, in short, of genius. For him, whilst alive, the praise of a scientific coterie is too often the only reward; when dead, an epitaph. By chance almost, and owing to the earnest solicitation of his friends, the illustrious originator of the atomic theory, or doctrine of chemical equivalents, had a small pension allotted to him on the civil list; but this not till late in life, nor until the period of highest mental activity had gone by. The best years of his existence had been given to the drudgery of teaching. What might we not have expected from his original genius, had early means been afforded him of giving it fair scope!

To mention the name of Dalton is to suggest the grandest day-dream made tangible, the greatest example of law made evident, which has occurred in modern times; assuredly the greatest since the discovery of the laws of gravitation, than which it appears to us in some respects more extraordinary. The atomic theory holds a position exceptional, and almost

exclusive, in the circumstance that it passed nearly at once from the domains of apparently the most abstract to those of the most practical departments of truth. Its deductions found practical application immediately; and what is still more strange, the atomic theory, exclusively accordant with facts though it be, admits of no final appeal, no *experimentum crucis*. The ultimate testimony would be a sight of the atoms; but their inconceivable smallness precludes that hope. A theory, then, it is, and must remain; but to use the language of Dumas, "A chemist speculating on the laws of definite combination is constrained to admit, that whether matter be composed of atoms or not, it could not act otherwise than it does, were it really atomic."

We have preferred to associate the name of Dalton with the name of the atomic theory rather than with the phrase "doctrine of equivalents," though the latter would have been more general in its scope. Nevertheless the evidence favouring the existence of atoms furnished by the laws of definite proportionalism is so strong, so practical, and moreover, it was so cherished by the great philosopher himself, that we unhesitatingly adopt it. Even those who object to the word "atom" as characterising a unit particle, admit it to the extent of signifying a unit force; and the latter term does not beget the more intelligible idea.

There are many persons who, unacquainted with chemical science, will, on first encountering the words "atomic theory," turn away from them as the representative of something difficult to understand, or something which, if understood, would be devoid of popular interest. Both assumptions are founded on error. Though the words "atomic theory" may sound harsh and technical, and the words "equivalent proportion" be still less popularly expressive, the genius of the thing can be made evident, even to persons totally ignorant of science. Firstly, what is an atom? To reply, "A very small particle of matter," is not enough. Granted that experience teaches us atoms are particles inconceivably small; but the derivation of the word "atom" (*a τεμνειν, incapable of division*) has no reference to size. Chemists are at this time acquainted with sixty-three different kinds of matter; and every testimony short of visual demonstration points to the inference that *all* matter is atomic. Nevertheless, testimony proves these atoms to be small beyond conception. We may therefore say, speaking of known matter, that atoms are particles inconceivably small; whence it has come to pass that the terms "atom" and "particle" have long been popularly used as synonymous. The thinker who would understand the doctrine of atoms as propounded by Dalton, and corroborated by all subsequent chemists, should carefully fall back upon the idea of indivisibility, regarding the quality of size as one altogether collateral. It is certainly not a probable, but nevertheless a possible assumption, that deep down towards the centre of our planet, farther beneath the superficial crust on which we stand than man has penetrated yet, not only another form of matter in addition to the sixty-three at present known may be found, but that the new matter may be composed of an aggregation of visible parts, all of equal weight and colour, shape and size. If these parts,—we need not say *particles*, for the assumption imposes no limit as to size,—if these parts were found to resist all human means to divide them, they would be, according to definition, atoms, notwithstanding their size. It so happens, however, that if matter at present known be atomic, we cannot hope to see these atoms, they are demonstrably so small. Newton did not despair of seeing them by the application of high microscopic power. No one entertains that hope at the present time. The question whether matter be or be not ultimately divisible was a favourite one with the ancients. Long and tedious were the arguments on both sides. The Grecian philosophic bent was the very antitype of our own. The Greeks contemned all applied philosophy; our tendency is to hold it in undue respect. The question of the ultimate divisibility or indivisibility of matter became too unpractical for modern philosophy; it therefore died out. Strange

that an hypothesis so exclusively physical as it seemed to be should have received its strongest affirmative testimony, if not conclusive proof, from the hands of a chemist; stranger that the day-dreams of Leucippus, Democritus, and Lucretius, should now form the basis of all that is certain in practical chemistry, to whatever art applied!

The ancient advocates of material indivisibility failed to recognise the difference between matter, and the space which matter occupies. Taking any given ponderable mass—an apple, for example—a mathematician would be likely to affirm that the infinite divisibility of the atom must be accepted as obviously belonging to things possible in essence, though impossible in effect. The division might be continued, he would argue, so far as our senses, our time, and our manipulative dexterity permit; and that the possibility of still further division must be received as a corollary. Herein lurks a fallacy. The idea has a contingent relation to the matter of the apple; but a direct and immediate relation to the space filled by that matter. Suppose each of the gigantic atoms, the existence of which we have already assumed, to equal the apple in size, then we perceive how fallacious is the ground taken by those who would deny the existence of atoms by geometric reasoning. Each of the newly-found atoms, though equal to an apple in size, would, being an atom, be indivisible; though the space filled by such atom would be capable of subdivision. Pass we now on to the task of examining how, by the labours of Dalton, the theory of atoms was rendered so probable, that no other theory squares with the chemical functions of matter. Addressing ourselves not to the chemist alone, we shall be sparing of chemical demonstrations, resting content with indicating the broad principles of the subject.

If A and B are two kinds of matter, capable of uniting chemically with each other, then the combining portions of the two, and necessarily the compounds formed, are either unlimited or limited. If unlimited, any number of parts by weight (say 1 part) of A may combine with any conceivable number of parts of B (say 8 parts); and in like manner with any fractional number above 8 and below 16, or finally above 16 and below 8. If limited, what are the limits and the conditions of limitation?

Of this kind were the questions which suggested themselves to Dalton. The unchemical reader may now translate A into hydrogen and B into oxygen; when our arbitrarily taken 1 and 8 respectively become 1 part by weight of hydrogen, and 8 parts by weight of oxygen. Now the combination of 1 part by weight of hydrogen with 8 of oxygen is water. There is one other, and only one other, compound of hydrogen and oxygen, resulting from the union of 16 parts of oxygen with 1 of hydrogen. Where are the intermediate compounds? Where the compounds of $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, 9 to 1, 9 to 2, and so on, up to 16 to 1? They are absent; they do not exist. Of such examples chemistry is full, and they unmistakably point to the atomic constitution of matter. If hydrogen and oxygen be not atomic, if the numbers 1 and 8 do not stand for the ratio of the weight of their atoms, wherefore this long absence of all compounds of the two between 1 : 8 and 1 : 16? Dr. Angus Smith has well acquitted himself of the task of making the atomic theory comprehensible. Still better, he has vindicated the memory of Dalton from the vague charge of plagiarism often brought against that philosopher; and has furnished an interesting biographical record of an extraordinary man.

POLYGLOT READINGS IN PROVERBS.

LIVE, HORSE, AND YOU'LL GET GRASS.—This is also Italian, —*Caval non morire, che erba da venire*. And it is even found in Turkish: "Die not, O mine ass; for the spring is coming, and with it clover." Unfortunately, "While the grass grows the steed starves;" and "For the hungry, 'wait' is a hard word" (Germ.),—*Dem Hungrigen ist 'Harr' ein hart Wort*.

LUCK IS ALL.—A desperate doctrine, founded on that one-sided view of human affairs which is expressed in Byron's droll parody of a famous passage in Addison's *Cato*:

"'Tis not in mortals to command success;
But do you more, Sempronius—don't deserve it;
And, take my word, you'll have no jot the less."

"The worst pig gets the best acorn" (Span.),—*Al mas ruin puerro la mejor bellota*. "A good bone never falls to the share of a good dog" (Fr.),—*A un bon chien n'échet jamais un bon os*. And "The horses eat the oats that don't earn them" (Germ.),—*Die Rosse fressen den Haber die ihn nicht verdienen*.

W. K. KELLY.



CORRESPONDENCE.

MADAM,—Having read in the last Number of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE your article on "Young Ladies' Work," I am induced to write to you in the hope of making known to the public through your pages, a new work for the good of suffering humanity. It is one which has already been tried with perfect success; and if entered into by the influential in all parishes, would take its place among the very finest efforts for the amelioration of crime and misery. One of the largest metropolitan parishes has lately sanctioned the visits of ladies to the different departments of the workhouse. The system was originated about six months ago by two ladies, and was found so efficacious in general and individual instances, that a committee was formed, consisting of the wives of the district clergymen and some of the most respectable ladies in the neighbourhood, to the number of fifteen. Every ward of the workhouse (except one, the casual poor) is visited twice a week; each lady taking a separate department. I will not intrude on your time or space by entering into details which would describe the great utility of this arrangement. Imagine the blessing to the poor sufferers from sickness, poverty, insanity, and old age, of thus receiving sympathy and kindness from those willing and able to give them help and comfort. Formerly their only experience was of cold harsh nurses and the officials of the establishment. Now they see kindly faces, and have ready help from private charity. Also suggestions for various improvements can be made to the proper authorities, offered, not with any impertinent intrusiveness, but respectfully urged. In many instances such suggestions have been adopted, to the great advantage of the suffering and helpless inmates.

This plan has now been in operation long enough to prove what a boon it would be, if it could be adopted in every parish. That the wives and daughters of the influential would readily give their help, there is no fear. What is wanted is, that those in parochial authority would consent to this arrangement throughout the land. It is the women of England who must exert their influence, and bestow a small portion of their time and thought, to the forwarding of this work of love and charity. They would need no other inducement, could they but see the gladdened faces, and hear the expressions of delight and gratitude with which "the ladies" are welcomed to the several wards by the poor inmates.

Few persons duly recognise the fact of what a vast mass of apparently hopeless wretchedness and vice festers in the workhouse of every large parish. Surely it behoves us to try at least, every means of alleviating both. In the instance where this system has been in operation, I have simply to say it has proved beneficial beyond our hopes: ameliorating

much misery, comforting much affliction, and exercising a most blessed influence alike on the vicious, the ignorant, and the suffering. I may add, that this beneficial influence extends to the nurses, who, aware of the check upon them, are far more careful and diligent in the execution of their duties.

I will now trespass no longer on your space, but remain, yours obediently,
S. P.

AN EPICURE'S STEAK.

I GLORY in a steak. It is a microcosm of all that's good in the wide circle of edibilities. It delights the palate, invigorates the frame, makes life bearable, and—who can doubt it?—is a guarantee of longevity. See it broiling—what a sight to console a hungry stomach and gladden a heart capable of joyous tremblings! See the clear fire glowing with a new joy in the consciousness that it is doomed to make that bovine slice a diet fit for gods—ay, too good for gods, such as antiquity represents them, bolting thunder-balls and quaffing the steam of earthquakes! See the gridiron, with its geometric bars checking with black lines the ground-colour of incandescent charcoal; the steak itself nicely lined with oleaginous bark, frizzling for your good, and gradually changing from sanguinary red to palatable brown; then how the gravy runs from it in luscious streams, mingling with the creamy slice of butter, and acquiring a medicated perfume with the powdered produce of the Spice Islands! I never see the gridiron ready for a steak without thinking of those lines of Gerald Massey's, where he describes somebody who

"Trode the red-hot bars of fiery torture,
And went his rugged way with bleeding feet;"

which image must have been drawn from the spectacle of a steak undergoing martyrdom in behoof of appetised humanity. Then, when the broiling has commenced, Southey's lines on Lodore always come into my head as most appropriate to the convulsions of a steak, which always groans on the fire, as if a particle of the soul of the ox had been cut away with it:

"Shouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting
Around and around,
With endless rebound;
Grunting and fighting—
A sight to delight in—
Charming and lulling the ear with its sound."

If a steak feeds one, it has its moral uses also; it suggests country, and calls to mind whole pages of Thomson, and Clare, and Carrington, and Tom Miller, and a hundred other hearty-brained men who have glorified the fat ox as the symbol of strength and endurance and patience, ay, and bodily cheer.

But how do you cook your steaks, eh? "There's the rub." Broil them? Good. Fry them? No, no. If you want to convert tender ox-flesh into leather, use the pan and a slow fire, and the experiment will be sure to succeed; but adopt my plan, and my head for it, you will eat nothing but steaks for the next three months.

Well then, fry it; but not in the vulgar way, with just a bit of fat to keep it simmering. A steak fried in the ordinary way ought to be carefully dished, trimmed up with parsley, and then—consigned to the dusthole. But I'll tell you how to fry a steak; and I do so tremblingly, for it is so grand, so original a recipe, that I think, if I were brisk enough, I might get a million francs for it from the society of gourmands; and now, if I "let the delicious secret out," my prospective million will be lost for ever.

Have your steak cut in one large slice from the middle of the rump; thickness, *one inch*; superficial measurement, seventy square inches; weight, about one and a quarter pounds. See that it has a nice rim of yellowish bark—that

is, fat—along the outer side; and if it is not really handsome, call a poor woman and make it a present to her for her hungry ones, and liberally pay for another for yourself. Take it home yourself, and from that moment let no hand but your own touch it. Even obtrusive eyes should be "kept off;" for my plan of cooking it is not to be hackneyed and vulgarised. Hunt up all the pickle-jars, and take from each kind of pickle a little of the vinegar, say a teacupful each of onion, cauliflower, cabbage, and French-bean pickle,—home-made of course, and with plenty of spicy flavours. Lay the steak in a deep dish, and pour over it the whole of the vinegar. Let it lay an hour. Then take a clean frying-pan; throw in three ounces of butter, and pour into it some of the vinegar from the dish, sufficient just to *stew* the steak in the refreshing compound. Lay the steak in it; let it stew; turn it as judgment dictates; and if you manage it right as to the quantity of liquor, it will, when done, be found imbedded in a thickened gravy formed of its own juicy essences and the dried-up pickle. Put the steak into a *very hot* dish before the fire, and into the pan throw an ounce more butter, one chopped-up clove of garlic, and two tablespoonfuls of ketchup, and a spoonful of raw mustard. Fry up the gravy, butter, ketchup, &c. in the pan till it boils, and pour it over the steak; and presto! the whole house will be fragrant with a dish that, in the words of puffing traders, "needs only one trial," &c. Only *one* trial, ha, ha!

EPICURUS.

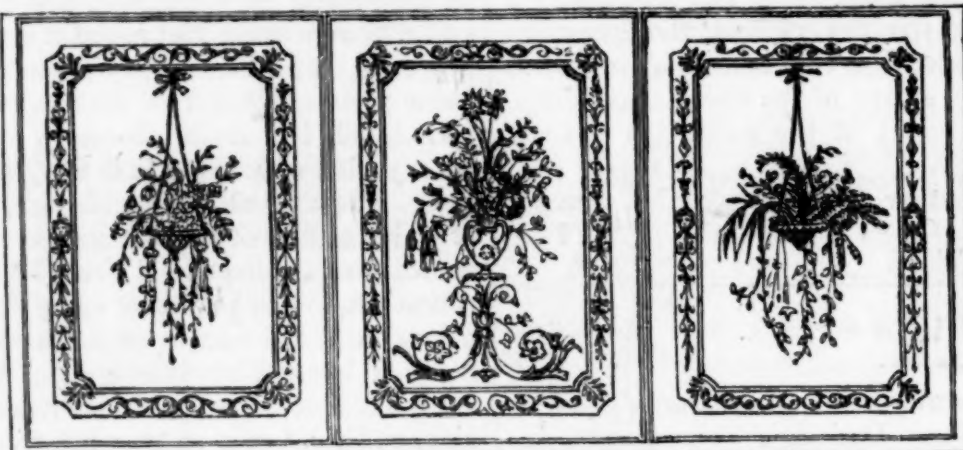
THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

III.—THE MANUFACTURE OF ENCAUSTIC TILES.

OUR cursory inspection of the raw material being concluded, we proceeded to Minton's tile manufactory, where are made those beautiful encaustic tiles now so generally used as the flooring of churches and halls; in which, though chiefly prized as being ornamental and dry, they afford by their exquisite neatness and cleanness a contagious pattern of what should be the condition of the rest of the structure. Models of propriety as are the tiles, it would be unjust to withhold the same tribute from all Mr. Minton's workmen, who, though we were charged with no commission to purchase flooring for church or hall, took as much interest in showing and explaining all that we had any right to see and know, as if they, and not we, were the sole gainers by the examination. It being the dinner-hour, the men were not at work; but nevertheless, wherever we went, some skilled workman was at hand, who, with civility that would have graced a far higher rank, performed, for our special inspection, each his own share in the manufacture. We were taken first into a room where, affixed to a bench, was a screw-press, like that used in coining. A heap of pulverised dry clay lay beside. A portion of this was swept into a mould beneath the screw, and made level with a piece of wood; and the cover of the press being worked by the hand of the operator, the screw descended with a pressure (if we remember rightly) of a hundred and fifty hundredweight, and forced down the clay-dust into the mould; from which it was immediately afterwards raised, by a simple contrivance, no longer in the form of dust, but a solid earthenware tile, requiring only the action of fire to be fit for use. Some of the tiles were plain; others, into which various colours were to be *burnt in*, and which are therefore called *encaustic*, had a pattern sunk in them. These were passed on to other workmen, who poured into portions of the pattern variously-coloured compositions in a semi-fluid state: the groundwork of the whole, for instance, might be buff, with a blue pattern in the centre and a red pattern at the angles. The tiles thus filled are laid aside for a certain number of hours to dry, with the upper surface rough and unsightly. When the colours are sufficiently set, the upper surface is scraped with a smooth piece of iron; and the pattern reappears, defined with wonderful sharpness, and with all the colours distinct, but of a dull hue.

From this workshop we were taken to an empty kiln,—

a huge cone-shaped building open at the top, and having several openings below. In these the tiles are placed, packed in cases of rude fireproof earthenware, called *saggars* (safeguards), which are piled on each other until the oven is filled nearly to top of the dome. Fire is then applied externally at the openings described above, and the heat is conducted through flues round the inside and under the bottom of the oven. The fire is applied very gradually, and is continued for several days; when it is allowed to subside as gradually, and the *saggars*, with their contents, are withdrawn, the cracked or imperfect tiles destroyed, and the rest prepared for the market.



EMBOSSSED GLASS.

SIR,—Having perused with much pleasure the different useful articles you have introduced in your valuable publication under the head of "Home," and feeling that any little suggestion which can practically aid in promoting the improvement and comfort of that little world, dear to the hearts of all, may be received as an acceptable offering, I venture to intrude upon your space with a suggestion for the ornamentation of window-glass, simple in execution while it is beautiful in effect. Most persons know of the existence of what is termed embossed glass; an article expensive in its manufacture or preparation, and therefore out of the reach of many; while the attempts made to imitate it are in general meagre and uninteresting. The usual method of imitating ground-glass is by dabbing the surface with putty, or painting the glass with a thin coating of white paint.

This last is the mode employed by the writer for carrying out his process; and a few words are necessary to explain the proper manner of performing it, which requires some little practice. The glass being first well cleaned and free from grease, is then covered with a very thin and delicate coating of white, applied with a short-hair ordinary paint-brush, great care being required to have only sufficient colour on the tips of the hair to leave the smallest possible stain upon the glass. The paint so laid on must not be applied by a sweeping motion of the brush, but by dabbing the end of it gently and with equal pressure over the surface. To avoid the colour being too thick in the brush, it is best to rub most of it out on a piece of board previous to applying it to the glass; in fact, if this is done, the brush can be readily replenished by dabbing it on the board instead of dipping it every time into the paint.

If care and attention are paid to the manner of applying this coat of paint, a uniform shade is given, bearing the closest resemblance to ground-glass. While the paint is wet, take a sharp-pointed piece of wood; and where lines are required to be drawn, a rule should be employed to draw them with. The pointed stick will remove the wet paint, leaving the glass clear; but the stick must be carefully wiped previous to commencing a second line, as, if not, the mark required will be smeared; and it is difficult to clear it, unless drawn clear in the first instance. With the same piece of wood the ornament and patterns may be drawn; but in some instances it is well to provide several sticks of



different widths at the end for drawing with (as shown by figs. 1, 2, 3), and these wider ones should be cut with flat ends like the edge of a chisel.

The advantage of these over the sharp point is, the removal of a broader surface of colour; and where great precision is required, a piece

of wash-leather fixed to the end will greatly assist; but this must be continually changed during the course of the work, as immediately it becomes charged with paint it is no longer of use. When your work is completed, care must be taken to protect the glass from being touched or damaged, as it will speedily dry, and then it will be useless to attempt its restoration. The window to be ornamented should be painted on the inside; and if the paint is properly mixed, will, when dry, bear any amount of washing, provided no soap or alkali is employed, a sponge with some lukewarm water being all that is necessary. Of the durability of this kind of work the writer has had ample experience, having decorated the windows of his own studio in this manner, which remained unchanged for fifteen years. It is admirably adapted for windows near the street, or facing a disagreeable view; and is preferable to every other kind of blind, inasmuch as it admits the same amount of light as ground-glass, and may be made most elegant in appearance. It is well calculated for staircase-windows, hall-doors, and inner glass-doors; and has this great advantage, that if the occupant of the house have ingenuity, taste, and perseverance enough to try the experiment of doing it himself, the cost is insignificant, and the pleasure will be enhanced by its being the result of his own labour. The best vehicle for painting the glass with is very pure white-lead, or flake-white, such as is prepared by the artists' colourmen, and sold by them in collapsible tubes; and this should be mixed with very pale drying-oil diluted with pure spirits of turpentine.

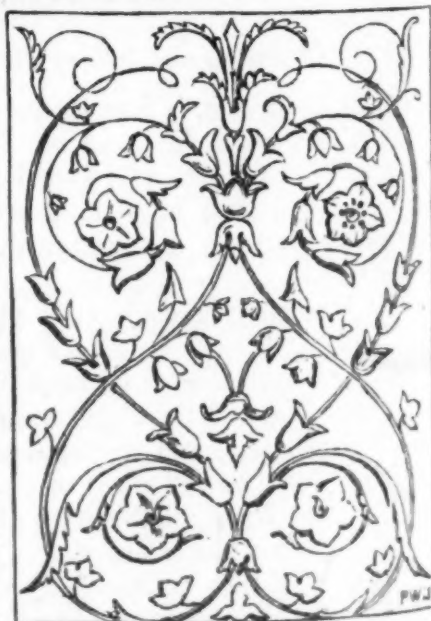
The writer has employed with great success diluted copal varnish, which has the advantage of greater durability; but it requires considerable management, and dries so rapidly, that in the hands of an inexperienced person its use would be more difficult. Annexed are some designs for the decoration of the glass. That at the head of the page is suitable for a blind, when done on the three lower panes of a window; here is a design for a separate pane. Combinations of such designs will of course readily suggest themselves for a staircase, or any other window requiring to be covered entirely.

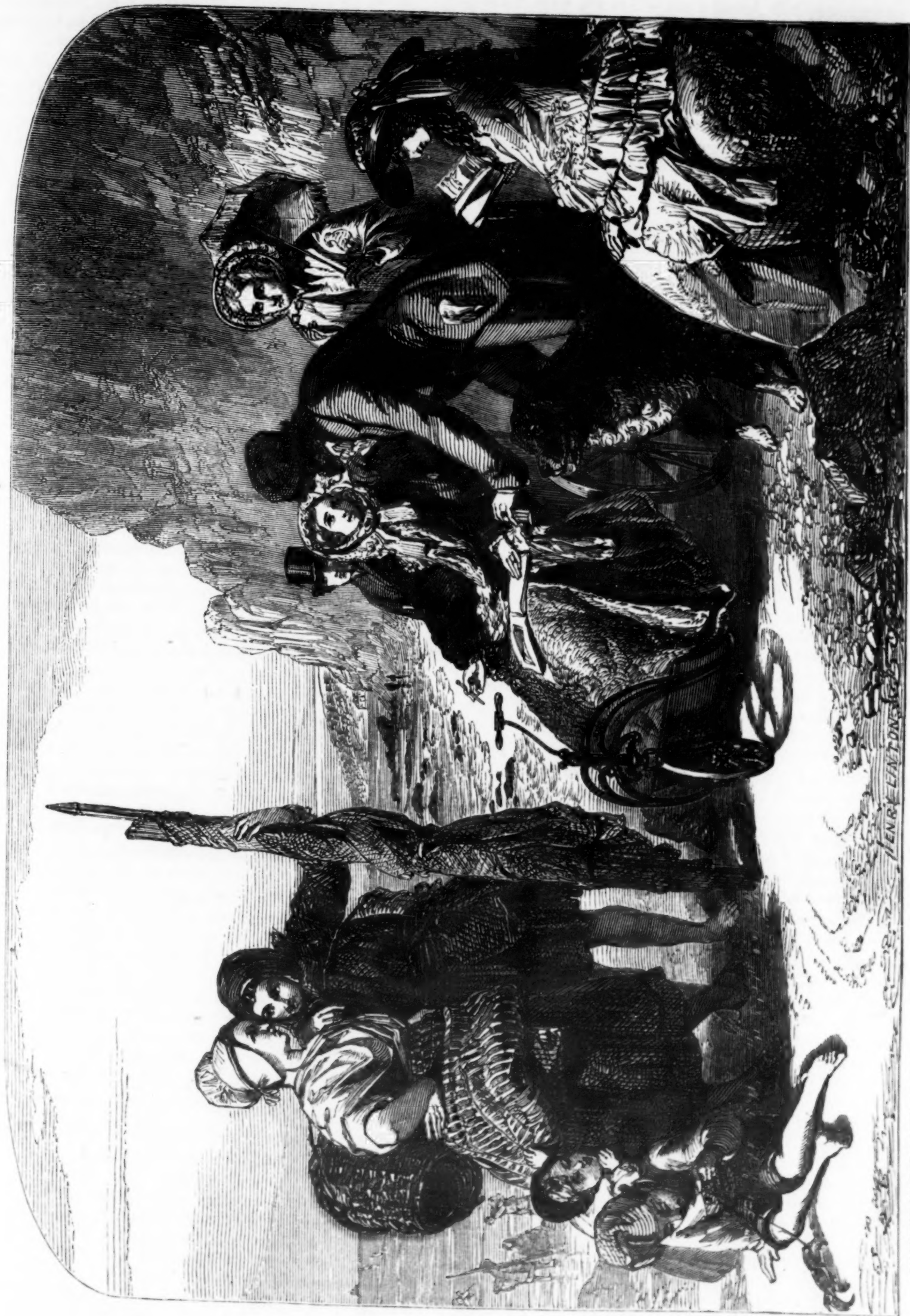
If difficulty in drawing the patterns on the glass at once, without something to guide the hand, be feared, take a piece of paper cut to the exact size of the pane of glass, and on that carefully draw the design to be executed; then with a fine needle or pin prick holes in all the lines of the pattern.

You must also prepare a little very finely-powdered dry colour (blue is the best), and tie it up in a fine piece of muslin; and having prepared your glass with the coat of paint, place the paper-pattern against it, holding it so as to avoid any pressure upon the glass, lest it should remove the surface; then gently dab with the powder-colour in the muslin over the lines of the pattern, and enough colour will pass through to make it sufficiently distinct for drawing with the point.

I am, &c.

ALPHA.





SPECIMENS OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL: NO. IX.

PAINTED BY A. SOLOMON.

"A CONTRAST."

23 MR 57

"A CONTRAST."

By A. SOLOMON.

AT low-water, on the long low coast of Artois, with its dwarf earth-cliffs, a party of English visitors are attending upon a young invalid lady, who has been sketching from her wheel-chair. Two of the Boulonnais fishing-people,—in that costume which so astonishes fresh English tourists,—having encountered the party, are scrutinising them with a want of tact which is not very French. The commiserating kindness of the girl's regard is some sort of compensation for this: she is evidently making a comparison between her own robust figure and the delicate one of the invalid before her, not without admiration of the latter's surprising accomplishment of drawing; to the flattering result of which she is obviously aided by the whispered remarks of her companion, who is leaning upon the rolled-up shrimp-net. There is indeed a contrast between the bronzed healthiness of the one and the delicate pallor of the other—opposite results of such opposed courses of life. The lady's husband leans upon the chair paying his affectionate compliment to her skill, and is himself robust enough to be a fitter mate for the fish-girl than for the frail being upon whom he is attending. The observer will notice that the painter, with a sort of sarcasm, has given the palm, not only of healthiness and vigour, but of real beauty and nobleness of features, to the natural woman; her face is actually more refined and grander than that of the other, whose artificial life has not only weakened her health, but in some measure degraded the clear tone of her features. Her mother stands behind, with eyeglass in hand, entertaining some sort of indignation at the intruders, whose remarks are not of that order with which a genuine mamma could thoroughly sympathise. She has not escaped the contagion of French fashions in the dressing of her hair; which effect, however, the painter, with great judgment, has confined to herself, and not shown as extended to her daughters: for we presume that the girl reading is sister to the sketcher. She, too, shows the vitiating effect of modern dress, as well as of customs, by the rigid way in which she holds her most artificial of bodies; her face also, though prettier than that of her sister, has the same characteristics of the hothouse about it. The children are prettily grouped; though we might have wished that the head of the one who is playing with the crab had not been quite so large.

The picture itself requires brilliancy of colour and clearness of tone,—qualities which Solomon is somewhat deficient in. The regard which an artist has for his work is always shown by the way in which he pays attention to little things. In relation to this, we cannot but remark, that the handle of the wheel-chair could never be reached by the rider, being far too short. Observe how scant of spokes the wheels themselves are. The dog's action is ordinary and commonplace; and we should have liked the character of sex to have been more strongly marked in the farthest of the fishing-people. The motive of the picture is so unusually good for its class, that more serious faults might be pardoned in a less accomplished painter than A. Solomon.

THE FIRE-EATERS.

By BESSIE R. PARKES.

It was a wet and windy night when we started off on our expedition to see the celebrated ceremony of fire-eating, which, with a few other amiable diversions of an equally salubrious nature, are practised by the tribe of the Ben Aissa at Algiers. We took P— with us as protector-in-chief, —large and burly enough to put to flight Arab garotters,—and toiled up the endless zigzags of the road leading, on the outside of the town-wall, to the Casbah, or ancient palace of the Days, a huge pile now converted into barracks, an armoury, &c. Here lived Hussein, the last dey, for fifteen years, scarcely daring to put his head out of his windows for

fear of his janizaries; and various black memories connected with the fortress singularly increase its mysterious attraction upon a bleak stormy night. Ali Ben Ali, our handsome Moor, who sits to C— for a model, had promised to meet us at the Porte Neuve, and conduct us to the house where the fire-eaters were to assemble. So we picked our way with difficulty over the rough ground below the wall of the casbah, traversed by little streams swollen by the heavy showers of this unprecedented wet winter, and groped up to the arch of the Porte Neuve, which looks at least 300 years old, and fitted to conceal amidst its vast black recesses any number of Algerine pirates on shore for a holiday.

We three Europeans stood motionless in the shadow, calling out "Ali Ben Ali!" till the old stones rang; but no answer came, he was not there. We then went through into the street. A street in the old town of Algiers means a steep, narrow, winding passage, often breaking off into steps, often running under the projecting upper stories of the massive white houses in a tortuous tunnel. On a windy night, when the moaning breezes rush in and out of these so-called streets, crying like the pitiful plaining voices of all the poor prisoners enchained or put to death in Algiers, the place is really awful; and the lamps, suspended by chains, in the old French fashion, at fifty and a hundred feet distance from each other, do but add to the gloom; for as they swing in the wind they reveal the blackness of the holes and archways, and the huge shadows of the houses swing one across the other like some terrific natural phenomenon, the precursor of an earthquake. "Ali Ben Ali!" we shouted in vain; but the cry brought out a Frenchwoman with a candle in her hand, at the head of a flight of steps, who eyed us suspiciously when we asked her if she could tell us in what house the ceremony of the *Hdrh* (pronounced *adra*) was to be held. "No," quoth she; "but Arabs live in all the houses round about here;" which information certainly did not add to our cheerful sense of civilised protection.

Up and down a few of the near streets we wandered, afraid of going far lest we should lose our way and find no exit till morning,—a misery almost as possible in Old Algiers as it would be in the catacombs; and doubly tantalised by fancying every now and then that we heard fitful strains of wild native music, or wilder drumming, borne upon the air, but in what exact direction we could not tell. At length I perceived a white figure stealing up one of the dark tunnels, at the far end of which faintly glimmered a lamp; and closing into phalanx with my two companions, I ejaculated, "*Hdrh, hdrh?*" "Oui, oui," replied the white ghost; and signing us to follow, he preceded us down the aforesaid tunnel to the low arched door, which led, so far as any external indication could show us, into the heart of the solid rock; for it is the great peculiarity of the Moorish houses that they are windowless on the outside (an occasional loophole of the smallest dimensions excepted), being lighted from the interior court which is to be found in every mansion. Ushered, not without internal tremblings as to the *bonâ fide* mission of our guide, through the little archway, we found ourselves in a small passage leading into a square court open to the stars, which had by this time begun to show their cheerful faces. Herein were at least thirty Arabs, seated cross-legged, or standing about the court, the arcade surrounding it, or the rooms to the side, of which the thick carved folding-doors stood open. I noticed that whenever they crossed the court they pulled off their slippers and walked barefoot, giving one the idea that for the nonce its marble pavement was consecrated.

We were accommodated with a bench under the arcade; and as it is never really cold at Algiers out of the wind,—which is an abominable breeze blowing from the Atlas mountains to the south,—I was not at all uncomfortable, and began to watch the strange scene before me, illumined by one tall candle, which brought out the light and shadow of the court and its eight pillars into the strongest relief, tinting the wild swarthy faces of a group squatting in its immediate neighbourhood, one of whom was a negro, pre-

paring his huge tambour for the beginning of operations. They took uncommonly little notice of our presence, and talked and laughed and passed in and out for about half-an-hour; while those who were to perform on the great round tambours dried them over a brazier full of charcoal, that they might give out their fullest tone. Our faithless Ali Ben Ali was there,—the only Moor among them,—pattering about the court with his naked feet; also the sheik of the tribe,—a venerable old figure, exactly like Michael Angelo's Jeremiah. Among the Arabs, some were very handsome, and had faces full of spirit and vivacity; others had high foreheads and hooked noses, which in England would have denoted much intellectual endowment; several more were very young—boys of fifteen or sixteen.

When they were fully assembled, and all their preparations complete, the drummers seated themselves under the arcade to our right, backed by a lighted room containing Arab spectators, and with the charcoal-brazier in front of them, struck up the devil's own tattoo; if, as I have always understood, there be such a melody upon the musical catalogue of the world. The final burst of thunder as each in succession took up his instrument really partook of the sublime; and our friend the negro worked away with indefatigable energy, as if he felt himself conductor of the band to his Infernal Majesty. When this had gone on at least twenty minutes, so that the hubbub, at first startling to our surprised senses, had in some sort softened by habit into a background for any thing which might supervene, we were thrilled by hearing a loud human yelp, like no sound by civilised ears classified, and by seeing a youth, apparently in a condition of demoniacal possession, leap out from among the group under the arcade, and take up his position in the court immediately in front of the drummers, who set to work with redoubled energy at this proof of the success of their musical endeavours; while the youth began to roll his head violently, moving it from the upper vertebrae of the back, so that his neck seemed as a thick cord by which to swing the seat of his soul. Such a loose and rapid motion, "backwards and forwards and round and round," I did not think a human head, attached to its trunk, capable of performing. It made me sick and dizzy to watch him; a sensation which did not lessen when the motion gradually extended to his whole body, which swayed as if made of the warmest gutta-percha, or as if every joint were separately tied on with loose ribbons. At this astounding exercise he actually continued a full quarter of an hour, moving in time to the music, and increasing his velocity when it increased in speed. To see his features was as impossible as to discern the spokes of a carriage-wheel in rapid motion. He suddenly stopped, and began raging about the court, shrieking out in Arabic that he wanted "Fire, fire!" This strange demand was no sooner made than another Arab ran forward, bringing him a red-hot fire-shovel, glaring and sparkling with heat. The gentleman of the contortions took it by the handle; and then eyeing it with extreme satisfaction, deliberately licked the fiery shovel two or three times on its broad flat side; he then struck it heavily with the palm of his hand, howling vehemently at the same time; after which he gave it back to the attendant, and went raging about in quest of more food. His desire was gratified; for the magnificent old bearded sheik, seated on a bench under the arcade opposite to our own, held out to him a huge leaf of the thorny cactus, the size and shape of a large battle-dore, at least half-an-inch thick, and covered with strong prickly spines. Our friend crouched down before the sheik, and stretching out his mouth like a donkey intent upon a thistle, grasped with his teeth huge mouthfuls of this delectable food, howling all the time, not with pain or disgust, but with a queer sort of ceremonial satisfaction; the sheik meanwhile wearing a grim smile at the heroic piety of his follower. After which the latter got up, and walked pensively about the court with downcast eyes, while the drumming continued with indefatigable energy. Whether it had gone on all the time, I am really unable to say.

In a continuous roar, noise becomes at last no noise at all; the fatigued ear accustoms itself to the new medium, and the whole attention is fixed on some more exciting point. (N.B. It is on this principle, applied to sight, that I understand the huge new clock at Westminster is to be faced with figures traced in points, as being visible at a greater distance than continuous lines.) Presently another Arab started up, and the same ceremonies were gone through, with this difference, that the latter had long hair, which was unbound for him as soon as the fit came on, and flew wildly about, greatly adding to the singularity of his appearance. The first Arab soon joined him; and linking their arms together, they rolled in unison, breaking off ever and anon into crazy dancing, backwards and forwards—a sort of desert polka. Two red-hot shovels were then called for, licked, and struck; then kneeling, with their arms across each other's shoulders, they placed themselves before the sheik, and together munched the cactus-leaf; after which they were joined by a third, who introduced a new element in the shape of a long green snake with a forked tongue, which he placed upon the floor, and played with, in dangerous proximity to our toes, which we tucked up instantly on to our bench. Then wreathing it round his neck and arms, he joined his companions in dancing vehemently as before; and as he happened to be next me, the wild motion occasionally brought the head of the reptile very near; he shook his forked tongue at me in a way that, as I was neither a snake-charmer nor a good Mahometan, was, to say the least of it, highly suggestive and unpleasant. Presently, however, they seemed to have had enough of it, or might have feared that snaky's temper was getting irritated and his digestion upset by the unwonted motion; for they unwound him, and put him up to bed in a wooden box with a sliding lid, where I have not the least doubt that he lay and ruminated upon whether or no the fair-skinned Frank and dog of a Christian would not have proved very good to eat. In this interlude we had three cups of very good coffee handed to us; of which refreshment we were quietly partaking, when we were thrilled with horror at seeing the second of the three Arabs transfix himself with a long iron skewer, passed through his cheek and out at his mouth. After which he very quietly worked a second through the other cheek, so that they crossed between his lips and stuck out like whiskers; then catching up a quantity of loose skin and flesh in front of his own throat, he stuck that also right through with a third skewer, and raged about the court howling; while a tambour turned upside down was handed to all present for a collection of coppers. By this time we had had enough of it; so dropping some money into the tambour, we made our salaam to the sheik, and sallied forth again into the quiet streets. It was now about ten o'clock; and groping our way again out of the Porte Neuve, we reached home without any misadventure.

We will add to this veritable recital of what we saw with our own eyes in 1857 a few paragraphs from a French book of travels.

Charles Marcolte de Luivieres says, in his *Deux Ans en Afrique*, p. 43: "One evening, having filled our pockets with cigars, we went to see the *Hdrh* (pronounce it *adra*), or fire-eaters. These are a Mahometan sect, who unite at certain seasons of the year to celebrate, after their fashion, a fête which seems to derive a remote origin from Christianity, since these individuals also call themselves *Beni Aissa*, which means to say, 'sons of Jesus.' It is said, that *Aissa*, being in the desert with his disciples, and these complaining and murmuring at having nothing to eat, he said to them, 'Why do you murmur? Have faith, and you will have what you desire also. Eat stones, insects, even fire; and if you have faith, this fire, these insects, these stones, will change into nourishment for your need.' It is this miracle which the *Beni Aissa* celebrate at the present day."

I have only to add the result of a few questions which I asked of Dr. Bodichon, a medical man long resident at Algiers, concerning the moral and physical effects of the

Hdrh. He told me that the sect is strictly Mahometan; the *Aissa* mentioned by De Luivieres not being intended for our Saviour, but for a prophet of the desert, and a true follower of Mahomet. That the state of violent excitement into which they are worked by the music and their own fanaticism prevents their suffering at the time from the effects of what they do; of which, however, the fire-eating part is but a trick, as it is easy to lick red-hot iron by covering the tongue with saliva in a sufficiently quick and dexterous manner; but that they are constantly ill a week after from the effects of their other experiments; and that the sheik will not permit any who are not robust in health to go through them, and turns back the delicate aspirants by putting his hand upon their heads when they leap out of the circle.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

AMONGST the most curious, and certainly the most useful, facts of scientific information we have to lay before our readers this month is, the announcement recently communicated by Dr. Stenhouse, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, that a cheap substitute has been found for animal charcoal; a substance so extensively used as a decoloriser, or bleaching agent, not only in the laboratory, but in various branches of manufacture. Granulated or rough animal charcoal, employed in the manufacture of sugar, of tartaric acid, and several other branches of technical chemistry, scarcely contains 10 per cent of real charcoal, and nevertheless costs some twelve or fourteen pounds per ton. The cost of pure animal charcoal, the substance employed in chemical laboratories, is at least fifteen times greater. The desideratum of supplying an efficient substitute has therefore long been felt. The general principle devised by Dr. Stenhouse is this: he prepares sulphate of alumina by digesting pipe-clay with oil of vitriol, and either evaporates it to dryness and mixes the result with finely-powdered vegetable charcoal, or mingles the fluid with the charcoal. In either case the mixture is burned for the purpose of driving off sulphuric acid, and leaving a mixture of charcoal with alumina. Dr. Stenhouse finds that $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of alumina affords the best result. Charcoal thus prepared is fully equal to bone-black for most purposes to which the latter is applied in the arts. We are curious to be informed on one point which Dr. Stenhouse does not touch upon. Can he render his artificial decolorising charcoal, in the granular form, capable of being used as a filtering mass, as charcoal is employed in the sugar manufacture? It may be well here to call attention to the fact, that though animal charcoal has long been considered the decolorising body *par excellence*, nevertheless vegetable charcoal was the first form of carbon employed for that purpose. The property was first discovered by Lowitz towards the latter part of the last century. Not until 1811 was it that the superior decolorising power of vegetable charcoal was discovered by Professor Figuier, of Montpellier. The rationale of the decolorising property remained unknown until 1822, when MM. Bussy Payen and Desfosses proved that the origin of the charcoal was immaterial, and that its decolorising effect was purely referable to the degree of its comminution. The efficacy of the new treatment devised by Dr. Stenhouse, therefore, depends on the alumina effecting a separation between the particles of charcoal employed. Dr. Stenhouse arrives at the conclusion that the artificial substance may be advantageously employed for the decolorising of any liquid which does not contain sulphuric acid; which latter would of course dissolve out a portion of alumina.

The preceding discovery, involving the employment of alumina, is suggestive of aluminium, that curious metal which is still under investigation by M. St. Clair Deville (the philosopher who first brought it to light *en masse*) and many others. M. Martin is conspicuous amongst the latter. He has recently sent in a memoir on aluminium to the Paris Academy of Sciences, making known the leading chemical

properties of that metal. When strongly heated, aluminium, it would appear, oxidises superficially. The crust of oxide does not penetrate to any great depth; but it is sufficient to remove aluminium from the companionship of noble metals, amongst which chemists were inclined, somewhat prematurely, as it would seem, to register it. Notwithstanding that aluminium does not support its original pretensions, it is still a very useful metal. Our readers will therefore learn with pleasure that various facilities of manufacturing it have been introduced, and that its price may be expected to fall considerably.

The Belgian agriculturists are on the *qui vive* respecting the discovery of enormous deposits of mineral phosphate of lime in the Ardennes; a substance which they somewhat prematurely, we fear, imagine will render them independent of bone superphosphate, if not of guano. We fear they are to be disappointed in this matter. In England there are also deposits of mineral phosphate of lime; but our attempts to employ the substance as a manure have been almost unavailing. It does not seem capable of assimilation by vegetables.

A very interesting paper has been read before the members of the Society of Arts by Mr. John Anderson, on the application of machinery in the war department. The author of the memoir, although shackled by official reticence, presents a suggestive glance at the mysteries of destruction enacted in our large military arsenal. Some time ago, Mr. Hale, the discoverer of the war-rocket without a stick, adopted the force of hydrostatic pressure for charging his rockets, instead of the process of monkey-ramming previously followed. It appears that hydrostatic pressure is now to be exclusively applied, not only in the construction of his own rockets, but those on the principle of Congreve as well. The operation of loam-casting for brass-cannon, as universally followed on the Continent, and until lately by ourselves, is now discontinued at Woolwich, and sand-casting adopted instead. When the Minié principle was first adopted in England, fears were entertained that the complexity of the bullet would interfere with the process of rapid manufacture. These fears are dissipated, as it now would seem, the Minié-bullet machinery now in operation at Woolwich being capable of turning out no less than 500 bullets per minute, or more than a quarter of a million daily. The manufacture of firearms and firearm-projectiles is now assuming a very interesting phase. On the one hand, attempts are being made to increase the calibre of cannon to a size unprecedentedly large; whilst on the other, the range of ordinary firearms is being extended to a marvellous distance by mere alteration of the form of the projectile. It would appear that non-military people expect too much from increase of the calibre of firearms, and underrate the value of increasing the range of cannon and small arms now in existence by modifying the construction of projectiles. Even the monster wrought-iron gun, of which the British Government has recently become possessed, lends but feeble support to the argument in favour of monster cannon. It is not considered safe to charge that piece of ordnance with a quantity of powder greater than one-sixth the weight of the ball; whereas the full charge of a long thirty-two-pounder is one-third the weight of its projectile. A very interesting report has recently been made to the American Government by Mr. Daniel Treadwell, on the practicability of constructing cannon of great calibre, capable of enduring long-continued use under full charges. This gentleman begins by assuming the capacity of bronze to withstand pressure to be equivalent to 30,000lbs on the square inch, and of the best sorts of cast iron, at 20,000lbs. He then goes on to express his belief that, so far as those materials are concerned, he conceives the limits of calibre to be nearly attained. Wrought-iron he looks upon as altogether an exceptional material. Not only is it too expensive for general use, but it is difficult to manufacture, difficult to be welded in large masses without flaws, and injuriously soft. Mr. Treadwell points to the fact well known to mechanics, and demonstrable

mathematically, that beyond a certain thickness no considerable amount of strength is imparted by increasing the weight of a cast cannon; and he suggests the following most ingenious plan for manufacturing ordnance of gigantic calibre capable of withstanding full charges of powder. Mr. Treadwell considers the softness of wrought-iron to be a fatal objection to the general use of that material for ordnance, even though the present difficulties of manufacture were removed. He proposes that the internal cannon, as we may denominate it, should be made of cast-iron, and reinforced externally by a system of wrought-iron rings, in the following manner. Fancy the outside of the cast-iron cylinder to be accurately turned, and indented with a screw-thread, upon which a series of external wrought-iron rings or nuts are to be screwed, and these last reinforced by similar screw-rings, or cylinders, and the reinforcement continued until the thickness necessary to withstand the explosion of a full charge of powder is attained; then we shall have a part of the idea of the American engineer. The main point of his proposition, however, is this: *each layer of wrought-iron cylinders is to be screwed on whilst expanded by heat*, so that their ultimate agency will be a continued and enormous pressure on the central cast-iron cylinder. In this way, it is assumed that ordnance of mixed composition can be made, possessing all the hardness of cast-iron where hardness is necessary (*i. e.* along the bore) and all the restraining toughness of wrought-iron. Whilst the Americans and our own home-authorities are endeavouring to increase the resources of warfare in this direction, Colonel Jacob is reducing to practice the idea long since mooted by Captain Norton, of making an efficient rifle-shell. Artillery and rifle practice are now being so rapidly pressed forward in parallel and emulative channels of development, that each by turn threatens to supplant the other in many applications for which each has been exclusively applied.

The daily increasing sunlight of the new year has seemed to exercise a sympathetic power on daguerreotypists, calotypists, and other heliographic philosophers; much having been recently accomplished in the way of improving the heliographic art. In the beginning of last month (January), Mr. Hardwick communicated to the Photographic Society some important remarks on impurities contained in commercial nitrate of silver, unfitting it for photographic purposes; also on some changes to which nitrate-baths are subject, and the best manner of dealing with them. These discoveries were made whilst endeavouring to improve the manufacture of collodion; in the course of which certain anomalous results were obtained when operating with commercial nitrate of silver. Mr. Heinnah, in his last edition of the collodion process, called attention to these anomalies, but was unable to explain them. He however arrived at the conclusion that the pictorial defects admitted of remedy by the use of ammonia and acetic acid. Mr. Hardwick attributes the peculiarities in question to the occasional existence of organic impurities in crystallised nitrate of silver. Impurities of this kind are evidently capable of being destroyed by fusion; but fused nitrate of silver is attended with its own objections. Firstly, it is liable to adulteration; secondly, if the fusing temperature be raised too high, or if it be too prolonged, a portion of the nitrate is decomposed, and lower nitrogen-acids of silver result. It is better, therefore, to recrystallise the fused nitrate carefully. Collaterally, Mr. Hardwick was led to investigate whether the gradual deterioration of nitrate-baths was not attributable to their becoming contaminated with organic matter, and he arrived at the affirmative conclusion. Most operators by the collodion process have noticed that nitrate-baths, after having remained a variable time in use, yield very bad results. Mr. Hardwick was led to develop collodion pictures with baths which had been purposely contaminated with known kinds of organic matter, in known quantities. The results were highly interesting. In the case of one organic body, he says, the plates immediately became covered with transparent markings, although nothing of the kind was noticed when

using a portion of the same bath purposely kept free from the organic addition. In a second instance, there was a peculiar iridescence of the film. In a third case, an intensified transparency of the developed image, with a dark solarisation of the high lights when looked down upon. In a fourth, great intensity of the blacks, with a loss of sensitiveness, and no gradation of tone. In a fifth, universal fogging. Some operators have suggested the filtration of nitrate-baths through kaolin when they have become thus inefficient. The process has not proved very successful. Far better, according to Mr. Hardwick, is it to remove the bath altogether, and extract the silver which it contains. Perhaps we may here do a service to the non-chemical heliographist in stating that silver can be extracted readily from nitrate by adding common salt until no more white precipitate (chloride of silver) is thrown down, washing the chloride well, adding a little hydrochloric acid, and agitating the mixture of acidulated chloride with some fragments of zinc. The reduced and pulverulent silver should next be thoroughly washed, and fused with a little nitre.

Mr. Sims has also communicated to the Photographic Society some remarks on the engraving of photographic delineations by hydrofluoric acid. Great attention must be given to the preparation of the collodion employed in this process. It must be thin, having as much alcohol in it as it will bear; ether only being added when it becomes too gelatinous. It must be iodised by solution of oxide of silver dissolved in excess of iodide of potassium. Much attention must be given to the selection of a proper kind of glass. Not only must it be free from specks and striæ, but regard must be had to its chemical composition. After many trials, it would seem that British plate-glass is preferable to all other varieties; and each plate of glass should be cleansed previously to use with sulphuric acid and water. The bath should be made of thirty grains of nitrate of silver dissolved in six ounces of water. Great care must be taken in the developing process, the camera being timed to a nicety. Sulphate of iron is used for developing the picture, and hydrosulphate of soda as the fixing material. Every particle of iodide of silver must be scrupulously removed by abundance of ammonia and water. Finally, the plate must be dried with equal care to that necessary in conducting the daguerreotype process.

Mr. Babbage suggests whether photographers would not derive advantage from the investigation of the laws which regulate the darkness of coloured objects, especially of unchangeable colours, as those of porcelain; and M. Despretz presents a communication to the French Academy of Sciences on the preparation of a dry collodion which will receive images after many days, weeks, or even months.

In physical science, M. de Senarmont has been performing some curious experiments to determine the laws of refrangibility of light when transmitted through water. In employing a new differential refractor, which he substituted for that of Arago, and which has the great advantage of separating the rays much further from each other than can be accomplished by that instrument, he caused two rays of light—one transmitted through air, the other through water—to interfere mutually. The water, during the experiment, was progressively cooled until it fell below the freezing-point; and the experimenter, by noticing the phases of interference, determined that the refrangibility of the water went on increasing in direct ratio with the cold applied; that there was no correlation of maximum refraction with maximum density. At the moment of solidification, the refractive power suddenly decreased; presenting a phenomenon requiring further study to determine its law.

M. Andres Poey, already so well known as an astronomer and meteorologist, has been following up his previous investigations relative to shooting-stars and luminous meteors. According to him, there were observed in England, from 1841 to 1855, no less than 1065 of these meteoric phenomena. Amongst them the colour of 326 was pure blue; of 46 bluish; of 11 pale blue; 2 were blue inclining to red;

and 1 greenish-blue; giving a total of 386 meteors in which blue predominated. The number of yellow meteors was 151; of yellowish, 18; total, 169. The red meteors were 129; reddish, 48; total, 177. It consequently appears that the number of blue meteors is more than double the number of those coloured yellow or red. White or whitish meteors are represented by 195 cases; orange-coloured, by 111. Meteors, the colours of which are composed of tints belonging to the lower part of the spectrum between green and orange, are 465; whilst those comprehended in the limits between green and violet are only 401. M. Poey, we are glad to find, is appointed to the office of director of the observatory about to be established at Cuba.

Amongst the novelties in entomological science of great importance, are the facts contained in a paper sent by M. Guérin Menneville to the Paris Academy of Sciences, on the causes which have led to a deterioration of the silkworm in France contemporaneously with the outbreak of the disease of potatoes and vines. French silkworms began to languish, and the deterioration has continued to progress. M. Menneville attributes the malady to the same atmospheric conditions—whatever these may be—from which potatoes and vines have suffered so much. He believes that a succession of mild winters furnish the immediate explanation of the disease, by causing the eggs to assume a premature vitality; and recommends that not only should the eggs be those of carefully-selected worms, but that they should be sent out of France into some much colder country during the winter, and that a fresh race of worms should be imported.

Amongst foreign inventions having a domestic interest, we must not forget to echo the praises of our French neighbours in favour of the ventilating smokeless open fireplace of M. Foret Chambor. Without diagrams and a long description, we could not convey an accurate idea of this fireplace. Perhaps we may find space for a fuller description hereafter.

In physiological and medical science there is a great deal of new information; some of it good, we hope; but still more of it extraordinary, we fear, without being good. In the latter category we include a new project, gravely set forth in the *Gazette Médicale* by M. Papillaud, on the prevention of yellow fever by inoculation. It appears from the memoir of M. Papillaud, that some considerable time ago Dr. Guillaume de Humboldt testified to the existence, in Central America, of a little reptile of undetermined species, which frequently bites people in the feet. The bite is exceedingly dangerous; but persons bitten are in future protected against the infection of yellow fever. The undiluted poison of the little reptile being too dangerous to be used for artificial inoculation, the writer of the memoir hits upon the following ingenious expedient. He provokes one of the reptiles to bite a piece of liver, which serves as a receptacle for the poison; and with the lancet dipped in the liver he inoculates his patients. The virus takes effect in twelve hours, and the patient is well in about six days, after which he is as little liable to attack from yellow fever as persons who have been vaccinated from small-pox. The greater number of persons thus inoculated are not attacked; the majority of those who are attacked, experience the disease in a mild form; and finally, of the small portion who are attacked, and suffer from the disease in its most virulent character, about one-fourth of the number will die. Out of 2477 inoculations, only 288, or 10 per cent, have had the yellow fever at all; 68, or 2 per cent, have died; 2247, or 90 per cent, have been preserved. No less than 16 per cent on the total population of fever-districts are said to be capable of preservation by this treatment! Dr. Ozanan is still prosecuting his experiments, physical, physiological, and therapeutic, on carbonic oxide gas—more poisonous, as it now seems, than carbonic acid. MM. Joret and Homelle announce the discovery of a substitute for Quina in "Apiol," extracted from the *Apium petroselinum*; and M. Chapelle is very sanguine concerning the efficacy of acetone or pyro-acetic spirit as a cure for Asiatic cholera.

The National Magazine.

[The Editors of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE cannot return unavailable Papers, except in cases where it may seem desirable to communicate with the writers.]

THE search into futurity is perhaps permitted to mankind as an antidote to their innate vain-glory. Every mortal soul joins the wild hunt as it sweeps by him; but few bring any trophies home, or come back with any thing to boast of in their memories. Man stands, indeed, "looking before and after;" but his forward look is into the middle of a mist; and though he can no more help assuring himself that he sees something, and knows what he sees, than he can keep from dreaming in the night, yet on the whole he is sure to be wrong—to find it out before he dies, or to leave the discovery as a safe legacy to his children. Let the subject of his prophecy be a man or a revolution, a law or an institute, the fact never falls out as he foresees it; the events of this world, like those of a better, come not with observation.

This is only true, however, concerning the forms of things. Their spirit and essence, like shadows in a cloud, may be seen in the dim future, while it reveals nothing of the shapes that are to appear hereafter. Here the patriot may take comfort, and the philanthropist refresh his zeal. The definite ends for which either of them is striving will rarely be attained; but no good end was ever striven for without a sure result of some kind or other, unlike in form, perhaps, but the same in spirit, with the hope and objects of its originator.

Mechanics' Institutes have not accomplished what was intended by their founders; their very name has ceased in most cases to be an appropriate and descriptive one. They are not specially or even chiefly associations of mechanics, but have drawn together a class something higher in the social scale; and if they should tell hereafter more expressly upon the labouring population, it will have to be through a different method from that originally proposed. But we are not, therefore, to reckon them among the failures of the day. The shaft appears to have been not quite deep enough to get at the lowest strata of society, but it has gone down to veins well worth the working. The system scarcely reaches what we call the mass of the people; but it has been taken up by a section of them who, in point of fact, had more need of it, inasmuch as they were better able to use it. Even thus they are not benefited alone. To drain the stagnant waters of ignorance from a single layer of human life, is imperceptibly to begin the drainage of all that lies below it. One of the chief effects of Mechanics' Institutes has been to wind up a little tighter the common springs of intellectual ambition; and a swarm of reading-rooms, libraries, and other educational helps, among even the most ignorant classes, bear witness to the assured success with which good seed may be cast upon the ground.

The founder of the first Mechanics' Institution was a Yorkshireman. He made his first experiment in London; but the plan seems to have done best in his own native air. Perhaps these Yorkshire folk have an institutional faculty among the many things good and whimsical that make up their individualism. At any rate, the great populous towns of the West Riding have a good deal to show in this way; and they have just given a culminating proof of what can be desired and achieved among them. Rather more than thirty years ago, a few working-men in the town of Halifax asked, in a way at once manly and respectful, for the assistance of their richer neighbours in founding a Mechanics' Institution. The help was given, and the institution formed, on a scale whose insignificance in the eyes of modern citizens is the best evidence of the prodigious progress that has been made. In three years the members occupied a room at the extravagant rental of four pounds sterling. In another couple of years, their numbers having swelled to a total of

eighty souls, it became necessary to take larger premises. This was in 1830. There is an engraving on the opposite page of the New Halifax Mechanics' Institution, opened on the 14th January 1857, in the presence of more than a thousand persons, who were able to stow themselves in the principal room. Besides the Great Hall, the building contains a saloon, a library, a drawing-room, and other apartments for class-instruction. It has cost eight thousand pounds. Less than half of this amount had been actually subscribed at the moment of opening; but before the enthusiastic company separated, the greater part of the debt was cleared away.

Efforts of this kind are worth much more than the figures that represent them, or the local good that is done. It remains for the men of Halifax to make the good example perfect by the future working of their noble institution. They have got a building equal to all their wants, and they have got it rent-free. The spirit of those who raised the money to build it with is an ample assurance that whatever the wealthy men of the place can do to secure success will be done abundantly.

The Halifax Mechanics' Institute ought to become a true people's college, and a model for the nation.

It must be remembered that the object in view is an educational one; that the people to be educated are not those who can give up their whole time for a certain number of years to the process, but chiefly young men and women who must work for their living in the day-time, and can only study in the evening. This of course is a difficulty; but the clerks, the shopmen, and the artisans of our time should be reminded, that after the age of childhood most men are in nearly the same position as themselves. The whole middle class of England are engaged all day in business of one kind or other. If they pursue intellectual studies, if they keep pace with the progress of science and the growth of literature, the work is necessarily done in the evening; and considering the difference in the social demands upon their time, in the amount of mental anxiety and the nature of their daily occupation, it is probable that most clerks have, if they please, at least as much leisure as their masters for the purposes of self-education. The chief advantage of the upper classes over those below them is in the nature of their earlier education; and even here it is not so much in the actual knowledge acquired in childhood, as in the habit of seeking and acquiring it, and the greater mental agility which is thus produced. An institution like the one established at Halifax offers to all who want it as much facility for evening-study as can be enjoyed by most men. What the people of Halifax have to do to make it as widely useful as possible is, by every means in their power to promote that early training of children in the rudiments of knowledge, and that habit of interest in its acquisition, which are the only essential preparation for the future work to be done in their great building.

It is mentioned in the Halifax Report, that while the number of members approaches 800, there are not quite 4000 books in the library of the institution; and of these only forty-three were added during the past year. This state of things is one great defect, often one fatal error, in Mechanics' Institutes generally. Their office can never properly be fulfilled without an ample supply of the best literature in the world. The difficulty is solely one of funds. From the experience of other libraries, we believe that such a supply as the present times require cannot be furnished at a less cost than ten shillings per head per annum, expended entirely in the purchase of books. The tenth part of this amount is perhaps nearer what is usually available. There is nothing in which the wealthy could do more important service to the cause of education than in contributing to the additional funds required for this great service. Nothing keeps men back intellectually and socially so much as a want of contact with the active thought of their own time. That thought is now embodied in books; and full access to the current literature of the day is the only door to it. The experiment of throwing it open to the poorer

classes as completely as to the rich has never yet been tried; and we feel satisfied that no time should be lost in making the experiment. Of course some selection must be made; but, with one of the speakers at Halifax, we most devoutly protest against the old-fashioned and thoroughly mistaken notion, that works of imagination are the least useful things that a poor man can read. Mere trash is good for nobody; but works of real excellence in fiction, poetry, and miscellaneous literature, should be regarded as essential parts of a poor man's education. They do for him exactly what nothing else has the opportunity of doing. They influence his taste through his feelings, and refine them both. The great gulf between the rich and poor is not nearly so much a gulf of learning, or of money, as of taste and feeling; and the true way to bridge it over is by elevating and refining these. We are not advocating excess either way; but the excess has all been one way hitherto, and the tide ought to be turned.

With such a building as they have just inaugurated, there seems no reason why the Halifax Mechanics' Institute should not sweep the whole circle of such human wants as can be supplied by social union. We should like to see a thoroughly well-considered plan of periodical recreation started in the new hall; a plan based upon none of those which have hitherto proved so unsuccessful in most places, but struck out afresh from the evident wants and wishes of the class who will meet together within the same walls. As membership is open to both sexes, there is no reason why those branches of domestic knowledge most needed by women should not be made a special part of their educational course. The instruction they receive at home is often of the worst kind, and entails a life-long disadvantage. Many other things suggest themselves; but good wishes are sometimes better than good advice. Those who have engaged so heartily in so excellent a work are doubtless busy enough in turning it to the best account; and our hope is, that the crown of future success may already be only a little way above their heads.



MY DIAMOND STUDS.

By THE AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER'S WIFE," "THE LADDER OF LIFE," &c.

"Diamonds of a most praised water."—PERICLES.

"Sir," said the stranger, "those studs are mine."

We were alone together, face to face. The train was flying on at the rate of thirty miles an hour. It was already verging towards evening, and we were about halfway between Liege and Brussels.

I shrank back into the farthest corner of my little compartment and stared at him. His hair was dark, and hung in long loose locks; his eyes were wild and brilliant; and he wore an ample cloak with a high fur-collar. I thought the man must be mad, and I turned cold all over.

"Did you speak, sir?" I found courage to say.

"I spoke, sir. You wear a set of studs—diamonds set in coloured gold—very graceful design—stones of an excellent water; but—they are not yours."

"Not mine, sir!"

The stranger nodded.

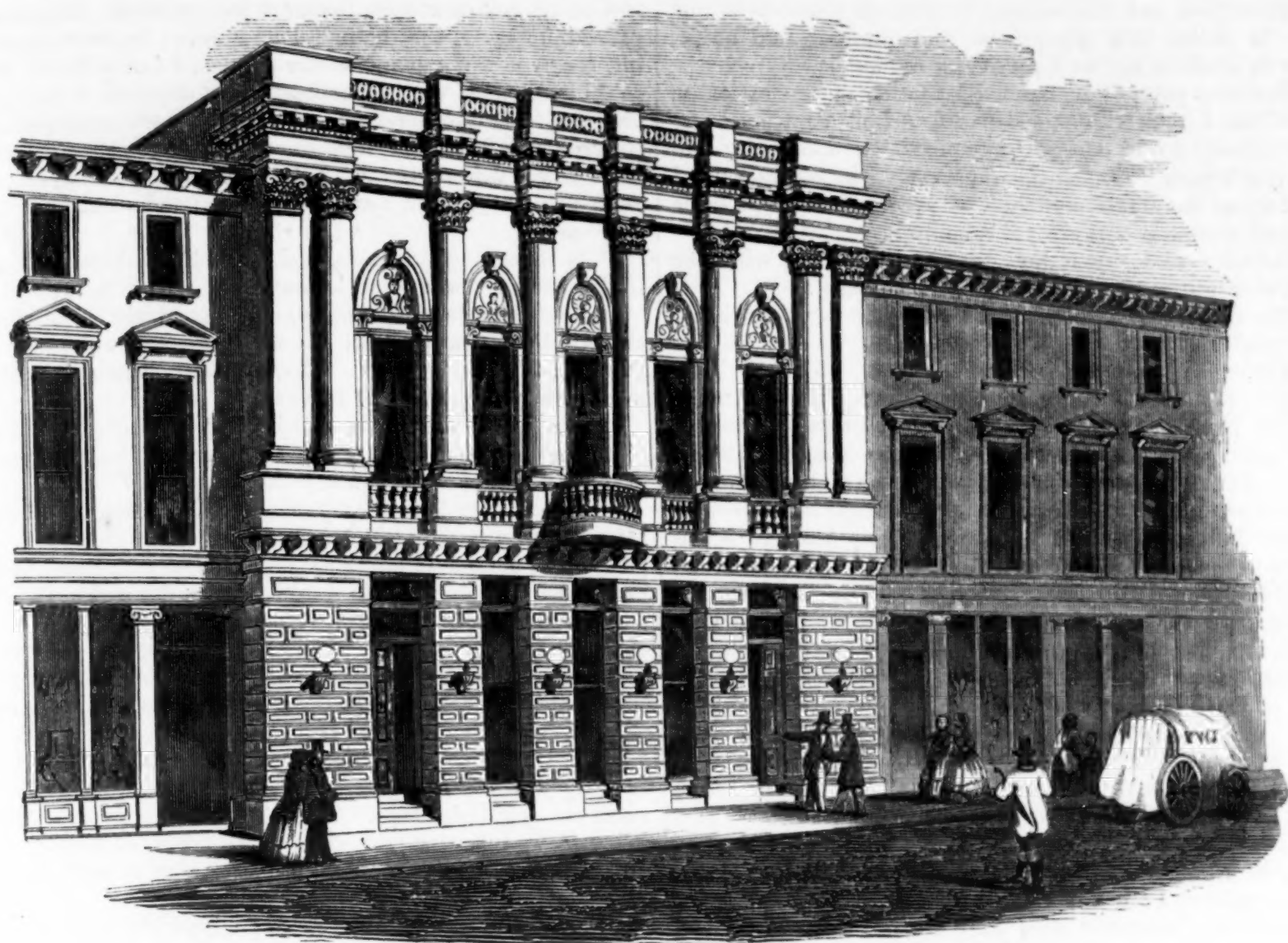
I had purchased them only a week before. They captivated me from the window of a jeweller's shop in Berlin; and they cost me—no, I dare not say what they cost me, for fear my wife should chance to see this article.

I took out my pocket-book, and handed the bill to the stranger.

"Sir," I said, "be pleased to read this little paper, and convince yourself that the studs are mine, and mine only."

He just glanced it over, and returned it to me.

"I see," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "that they



THE NEW MECHANICS' INSTITUTION AT HALIFAX.

appear to be yours by right of purchase; but nevertheless they belong to me by right of inheritance. I can make this clear to you very easily, if you choose to hear my story; and no doubt we shall presently contrive some plan by which to settle the question of ownership."

My heart sank within me at the cool certainty of his voice and countenance.

"Shall I go on?" he asked, lighting a cigar.

"O, by all means," I replied. "I shall be delighted."

He smiled ominously to himself; then sighed and shook his head; passed his fingers twice or thrice through his elfin locks; crossed his feet deliberately on the opposite cushions; and fixing his eyes full upon me, thus began:

"Though a native of Russia and born in St. Petersburg, I am of Hindoo descent. My grandfather belonged to the province of Hyderabad; but, travelling thence while yet a young man, established himself at Balaghaut, and became a worker in the great diamond-mines commonly known as the mines of Golconda. A grave, silent, unsociable man was my grandfather, and little beloved by his fellow-miners. The superintendent, however, placed great confidence in him; and by and by, being promoted to the situation of overseer, he married. The only offspring of this union was Adjai Ghosal, my father. The Hindoos, as you must be aware, place a high value upon learning; and even the poorest evince such a respect for education as would do honour to the working-classes of a more enlightened community. Of this feeling no man in his position partook more largely than my grandfather. Uninstructed himself, he was ardently desirous that his son should benefit by advantages which, generally speaking, were accessible only to the wealthy; and in pursuance of this ambition, sent Adjai Ghosal at the age of eleven years to a large native academy at Benares. People wondered at first, and asked each other what the thing meant, and where the overseer found means to do it. 'Have you found a lac of rupees lately?' inquired one. 'Do you intend to make a diamond-

merchant of the little Adjai?' asked another. But my grandfather only held his peace; and after a time the marvel died away, and was forgotten. And thus eleven more years passed on; and my father, at the age of twenty-two, was summoned home to Balaghaut to receive the last benediction of his expiring parent. He found the old man stretched upon a mat, and almost speechless.

'Adjai,' he murmured,—'Adjai, my son, thou art arrived in time—in good time; for I could not have borne to die without seeing thee.'

My father pressed his hand in silence, and turned his face aside.

'Adjai,' said my grandfather, 'I have a terrible secret to confide to thee; one which my soul refused to carry to the grave. Canst thou endure to hear it?'

My father urged him to speak.

'It is to my own shame to reveal it to thee, Adjai; but I bow my head to the punishment. My son, I have sinned.'

My father became more curious than ever.

'Thou wilt not despise my memory, Adjai?'

'By Brahma, no!' said my father, raising his hand to his head.

'Then hearken.'

The old miner lifted himself upon his elbow, and collected all his strength. My father knelt down and listened.

'It happened,' said my grandfather, 'just three-and-twenty years ago, and I was then but a working-miner. I chanced one day upon a vein of extraordinary richness. My son, I was tempted; the evil one took possession of my soul;—I secreted five diamonds. One was incalculably valuable—larger than a walnut, and, as far as I could judge, of admirable water. The other four were about the size of peas. Alas, Adjai! From that hour I was a miserable man. Many and many a time I was on the point of confessing the theft; and was as frequently deterred by shame, fear, avarice, or ambition. I married, and a year after my marriage thou wert born. Then I resolved to dedicate this

wealth to thee, and thee alone; to educate thee; to enrich thee; to make thee prosperous and learned; and never, never to profit in my own person by my sin.'

'Generous parent!' exclaimed my father enthusiastically.

'When I took thee to Benares, Adjai,' continued my grandfather, 'I sold one of the four smaller diamonds; and with this I have defrayed the expenses of thy education. I never spent one fraction of the sum upon myself; and some few golden rupees of it are yet remaining.'

'Indeed!' said my father, who was listening with the greatest attention. 'And the rest of the gems?'

'The rest of the gems, Adjai, thou canst restore when I am gone.'

'Restore!' echoed my father.

'Yes, my child. Thou hast education. It will make thee far happier than the possession of ill-gotten riches; and I shall die in peace, knowing that reparation will be made. As for the few remaining rupees, I think, if thou art not over-scrupulous in the matter, thou mightest almost be justified in keeping them. They will help thee to begin the world.'

'Indeed!' said my father, with a curious sort of smile flitting about the corners of his mouth.

At this moment the old man changed colour, and a shudder passed over him.

'I—I have told thee just in time, Adjai,' he said falteringly. 'I feel that—that I have not many moments to live. Come hither that I may give thee my blessing.'

'My dear father,' said Adjai Ghosal, 'you have forgotten to tell me where the diamonds are hidden.'

'True,' gasped the dying man. 'You will find them, my son—you will find them—but thou wilt be sure to restore them as soon as I am dead?'

'How can I restore them,' said my father impatiently, 'unless you tell me where to find them?'

'True—very true, my Adjai. Look, then, in the roll of matting which I use for a pillow, and there thou wilt find the three smaller gems and the large one. See—see the superintendent—Adjai—my—my—'

A rapid convulsion, a moan, a heavy falling back of the outstretched hands, and my grandfather was dead."

The stranger broke off abruptly in his story, and laid his hand upon my sleeve.

"And now, sir," said he, "what do you suppose my father did?"

"Went into mourning, perhaps," said I, deeply interested.

"Nonsense, sir. He went to the roll of matting."

"And found the diamonds?"

"Not only found them, sir," said the stranger, laying his finger on his nose,—“not only found them; but—can't you guess?"

"Well, really," said I hesitatingly, "I—that is—if I should not be offending you by the supposition, I should guess—that he kept them."

"Kept them, sir! that's it," said the stranger, rubbing his hands triumphantly; "and, in my opinion, he was quite right too. Well, sir, to continue. As soon as my venerable ancestor had been consigned to the grave, my father left Balaghaut for Calcutta; and embarking there on board a Russian vessel, sailed for St. Petersburg. Arrived at that city, he consigned the gems to a skilful artist, by whom they were cut and polished. Sir, when cut and polished, it was found that the larger stone weighed no less than one hundred and ninety-three carats! My father knew that his fortune was made, and applied for an audience of the Empress Catherine II. The audience was granted, and the diamond shown; but the empress was unwilling to accede to my father's terms; and he, believing that in time he should obtain his price, suffered the matter to drop; took a beautiful mansion overlooking the Neva; naturalised himself as a Russian subject, under the name of Peter Petroffski, and patiently bided his time. Thus nearly a twelvemonth passed; and my father, who had long since parted with the

last of his golden rupees, began to feel nervous. The event proved, however, that he had done wisely; for he one morning received a summons to the palace of Count Orloff, and sold his diamond to that nobleman for the sum of one hundred and four thousand one hundred and sixty-six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence. Count Orloff was then Catherine's favourite; and to her, on her birthday, he presented this royal gift, some few days after he had made the purchase."

"Is it possible," I exclaimed, almost breathless with astonishment,—“is it possible that these are all facts?"

"Facts!" echoed the stranger indignantly. "Turn to the article on diamonds in any encyclopædia, and convince yourself. Facts, indeed! Why, sir, that inestimable gem now adorns the sceptre of Russia!"

"I beg your pardon," I said humbly; "pray go on, sir."

He seemed vexed, and remained silent; so I spoke again.

"In what year did you say this happened?"

"In the year 1772," he replied, falling back insensibly into his narrative. "My father now found himself in a position to command immense commercial influence; so he embarked a portion of his wealth in the fur-trade, and became in process of time one of the foremost among the merchant-princes of Russia. During many years he devoted himself utterly to the pursuit of riches; for gold, I must confess, was my father's weak point. At last, when he had obtained the reputation of being at the same time a millionaire and an irreclaimable old bachelor, he married; married at sixty years of age, just thirty-eight years from the time when he left Balaghaut. The object of his choice was a rich widow, in every way suitable as regarded money and station; an excellent woman, and the best of mothers! I respect her memory."

Here the stranger paused, and wiped his eyes with a very fine cambric handkerchief, which filled the carriage with an overpowering perfume of patchouli. Presently, conquering his emotions, he resumed:

"But for my birth, which took place within two years from the date of my father's wedding, the newly-created family of Petroffski must have become extinct. As it was, therefore, my appearance was hailed with extravagant rejoicings. I was christened after my father, Peter Petroffski. My schoolfellows called me Peter the Second. I remember little of my boyhood, excepting that I had always plenty of roubles in my pocket, a pony, and a mounted servant to attend me to and from school; and plenty of indulgence from all my teachers. No boy in the academy played so many pranks, or was so readily forgiven as myself; but money covers a multitude of sins, especially at St. Petersburg."

He paused for a moment, and a question which had long suggested itself to my mind now rose to my lips.

"You have not yet told me," said I, "what your father did with the three smaller diamonds."

"Sir," replied the stranger, "I am coming to that presently."

So I bowed, and waited in silence.

"From school I went to college; and, as my father's position excluded me from the college of nobles, I travelled into Germany, and studied for five years at the University of Heidelberg."

"Peter," said my father, as we parted, 'remember what a priceless life is yours. Above all things, my darling son, be careful not to injure your health by over-application.'

Never was good advice more scrupulously followed. My studies at Heidelberg were pleasant rather than profound, and consisted chiefly of rowing, drinking, and fighting. By dint of strict attention to these duties I earned for myself the rank of a 'mossy-head;' and indeed I may say, that I graduated in Bavarian beer, and took out my degree in sabre-cuts. At length I reached the age of twenty-one, and returned to St. Petersburg, just in time for my birthday. On this occasion my father threw his house open for a succession of dinner-parties, balls, and suppers. On the morning of the actual day he called me into his study, signifying

that he had something to say and something to give to me. A small morocco case of triangular form was lying on his desk. From the moment I entered the room I felt convinced that this was intended for me; and my attention, I fear, wandered sadly away from the wise and affectionate discourse which my father (leaning back complacently in his great arm-chair) was pleased to bestow upon me. He said a great deal about the extent of his trade, and the satisfaction it was to him to have brought up a son who should succeed him in it; informed me that from this day I was to fill the position of junior partner, with a munificent share in the yearly profits; and finally, taking up the morocco case, bade me accept that as an earnest of his parental love. I opened it, and beheld a superb set of diamond-studs. Each stone was a brilliant of the purest water, and about the size of an ordinary pea. Their value, I feel convinced, could not be less than three hundred guineas of your English money. For some moments I was speechless with delight and astonishment, and could scarcely stammer forth a word of thanks. Then my father smiled, and told me the history which I have just related to you. I had never heard any thing of this before. I knew only the common story current in the city, that my father had been a great Eastern merchant before he settled in Russia, and that he had sold a wonderful diamond to the Empress Catherine many years ago. If, therefore, I had been amazed before, I was now still more so, and listened to the narrative like a man in a dream.

'And now, my dear boy,' said my father in conclusion, 'these diamonds, as I daresay you have already guessed, are the three remaining stones which I took from your grandfather's pillow of matting just sixty years ago.'

From this time I led an enviable life. I owned the handsomest *droschky*, the finest horses, and the smallest tiger in St. Petersburg. My pleasure-yacht was the completest that lay alongside the quays of the Neva. My stall at the opera was next to that of young Count Skampsikoff, the great leader of fashion and folly, and close under the box of Prince Ruffantuff, who was at that time one of our most influential nobles, and generalissimo of the Russian army. It was not long before Skampsikoff and I became the firmest friends in the world; and before six months were over, I was known far and near as the fastest, the richest, and the most reckless scapegrace about town.

It was at this period, sir, that I first beheld the peerless Katrina."

The stranger paused, as if he expected me to be surprised; but finding that I only continued to listen with a countenance indicative of polite attention, he looked at his watch, ran his fingers through his hair, hemmed twice or thrice, and then went on with his story.

"You will ask me, perhaps,—who was the peerless Katrina? Sir, she was a violet blooming upon a rock; a rainbow born out of the bosom of a thunder-cloud. She was the dream, the poetry, the passion of my life! Katrina, sir, was the only child of Prince Ruffantuff, whose name I have already mentioned. Strange that the fairest, the most ethereal of beings should come of so stern a parentage! As Katrina was the gentlest of women, and the most loving, so was Ivan Ruffantuff the fiercest of soldiers and the severest of fathers. He carried the discipline of the camp into the privacy of his home, and made himself dreaded as much by his household as by his troops. I never saw so forbidding a countenance, or one more expressive of pride and defiance. Gazing upon the delicate creature seated beside him in his box, one wondered how nature could have played so strange a turn, and sought in vain for the faintest trace of apparent consanguinity between them. Prince Ivan was a giant in stature; Katrina was almost childlike in the graceful slenderness of her proportions. Prince Ivan was swarthy of complexion, and his features were moulded after the flat intellectual type of the Tartar tribes; Katrina's features were regular, classical, and Greek. Prince Ivan was proud and cruel; Katrina was loving, innocent—born for all purposes

of tenderness and womanly compassion. What marvel, then, that I loved her? Loved her, sir, as only few can love—loved her with all the force, and self-abandonment, and passion, of which man's nature is capable. I had never been in earnest before, but I was in earnest now—hopelessly in earnest, as I well knew; but despair itself fed my love with fresh energy, and obstacles only served to make me more determined. For a long time I loved her with my eyes and heart alone, as a devotee worships a saint upon an altar. I could but gaze upon her from afar. I had never even listened to the sound of her dear voice, though I would have died only to hear her pronounce my name. Night after night, during the whole opera-season, I sat and watched her from my stall. I heard no more of the music than if I had been in Siberia; I grew thin and pale and abstracted; I fell into a listless dreaming mood, and replied at random when spoken to; above all, I wandered like a ghost in and out of the *salons* and gaming-rooms where I had of late been so eager in the pursuit of pleasure. At last Skampsikoff came to my rooms one morning, and remonstrated with me upon my unaccountable despondency.

'You don't do justice to me, my dear fellow,' he said, twirling his moustachios. 'I have introduced you, set you going, made you, in point of fact, the fashion; and I take it rather unkindly that you should reflect so glaring a discredit upon my judgment. You might as well be at La Trappe, as far as your conversational powers go at present; and as for your looks, why, hang it, you know the least a man can do for society is to look pleasant. Are you in debt, and does the dear papa draw his purse-strings too closely?'

I shook my head. I had no debts but such as I could readily liquidate, and my father was as liberal to me as I could reasonably desire. It was not that.

'Not that!' exclaimed Skampsikoff, 'well, then, you must be in love. Why, man, you blush! The thing's as clear as the sunlight; and Peter, the magnificent Peter, is in love! Now, by all the saints, this is too ridiculous! Who's the girl?'

'The Princess Katrina,' I answered with a groan.

Skampsikoff started, and whistled dismally.

'The Princess Katrina!' he repeated.

I laid my head down upon the table, and burst into tears.

'I know that I am a fool,' I said, sobbing. 'I know that I have no chance—no hope—no resource but exile or death; and yet I love her, O, I love her, and I am dying—dying—dying day by day!'

My friend was moved.

'Cheer up, Petroffski,' he said, laying his hand upon my shoulder. 'Cheer up; for I think I know of a plan by which to gain you an interview with her; and that once done, why you must accomplish the rest for yourself. You will throw yourself at her feet. You will propose an elopement, or a secret marriage. She will not have the heart to refuse you. We will set relays of horses for you on the road to the nearest seaport; you will embark on board a schooner, ready hired for the purpose; and, once off and away, who is to follow? Come, come, I see nothing but success for you; and if you will but look a trifle more lively, I'll set out at once to see about the ways and means.'

I felt as if night had turned to day on hearing these words.

'Skampsikoff,' I said, 'you have saved my life!'

That evening, to my surprise, I saw him enter Prince Ruffantuff's box in company with a nobleman of his acquaintance, and be presented in due form both to Ivan and his daughter. He did not remain there very long, but contrived to enter into conversation with Katrina. Just before he left the box, he nodded to me and waved his hand. She instantly raised her glass. They exchanged a few sentences. She looked again; and I felt as if the whole theatre were turning round. In a few moments he had made his bow, taken his leave, and returned to his stall at my side.

'The ball is rolling,' he said, rubbing his hands gaily; 'the ball is rolling, and the game's begun. She saw me

recognise you, and naturally asked me who you were. "A fellow," said I, "with the best heart and the handsomest studs in St. Petersburg." "Of horses?" asked the fair Katrina. "No," said I; "of diamonds." Whereupon she looked again. "Not but that he has horses too," I added, "and plenty of them. He's a noble fellow, and my most intimate friend; but he is far from happy." She surveyed you with more interest than ever. There's nothing like telling a woman that a man's unhappy. She's sure to be half in love with you directly. "He looks pale," said the fair Katrina. "What is the cause of his sorrow?" I smiled and shook my head. "Princess Katrina," I said meaningly, "you are the very last person in the world to whom I could confide that secret." With this I took my leave; and I think you ought to be very much obliged to me.

And I was very much obliged to him, especially when I saw that Katrina's attention wandered continually that evening from the stage to myself. Once or twice our eyes met. The first time, she started; the second time, she blushed; and I thought myself the happiest fellow in the world.

Henceforth life assumed for me a new and beautiful aspect. Somehow or another (whether through the hints dropped by my friend, or her own attentive study of my eloquent glances, I know not) the fair Katrina became aware of my passion, and was not so cruel as to discourage it. Sometimes, when they stood near me in the crush-room, she would drop her handkerchief or her fan, that I might have the opportunity of handing it to her. Sometimes she left a flower from her bouquet lying upon the front of her box, that I might go round and take it when she and her father were gone. At last she accorded me an interview."

The stranger buried his face in his hands, and sighed heavily.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, in a broken voice. "My—my emotions on recalling this portion of my history are so overwhelming, that (with your permission) I must smoke a cigar."

I have, be it known, a particular aversion to the odour of tobacco. To speak plainly, it disagrees with me. However, in this instance I waved my objections; the stranger lit his Havannah; and presently the story of my diamond-studs went on.

"Those only who have loved," said the stranger, "can picture the condition of my mind during the hours that preceded that eventful interview. I could think of nothing, speak of nothing, but Katrina. To me the universe was all Katrina, and there was only nothingness beyond. Dusk came at last—the dusk of a winter's evening, when the tinkling bells of the *droshky*-horses, and the guttural 'Yukh, yukh!' of the drivers, rose from the streets and public squares, where the snow lay thickly on the ground, and on the bare branches of the trees, and upon the roofs and balconies of palaces. Then dusk turned rapidly to night, and the frosty stars came out; and I wrapped myself in my cloak of furs, and went out alone on foot.

Swiftly and silently I traversed the few thoroughfares that separated our dwellings; and, gliding along by the wall at the back of Prince Ivan's gardens, stationed myself in a deep angle of shadow, and waited patiently. Presently a small side-door opened, and an old woman, closely muffled, looked out.

"What art thou doing there?" she asked, in a shrill tremulous tone.

"Waiting for the sun to shine," I replied, in the words of the signal which we had previously agreed upon.

The woman extended her hand to me, led me in, closed the door, and so guided me in utter darkness through a long passage. Presently I saw a thread of brilliant light; then a door was thrown suddenly open, and I found myself in a brilliantly lighted apartment. Here my conductress desired me to wait, and hobbled out of the room. A quarter of an hour elapsed thus. I counted the seconds by a time-piece on a console-table; but every minute seemed to be the length

of an hour. At last the door opened. I turned; I fell at her feet; it was Katrina!

For some moments neither of us spoke. I do not now recollect which first broke the delicious silence; but I believe it was myself. The remembrance of what was said has altogether passed away from me. It seems to me now like a dream, or the dream of a dream, so bright, so far away, so unsubstantial!

There was a fauteuil close at hand. I placed her in it; I knelt down before her; I bent my head upon her knees, and covered her little hands with kisses. And so we told each other the story of our love,—a broken faltering story, interrupted by exclamations and questions, tears and kisses, but the sweetest that is told (once only during life) by human lips.

Suddenly,—while I was yet kneeling at her feet, while my arm clasped her waist, and one of her dear hands was resting on my head,—we heard voices close at hand.

'Her highness,' said one, 'is in her boudoir overlooking the terrace.'

'Good,' replied another, at which we both shuddered. 'You need not announce me.'

'Alas,' cried Katrina, with trembling lips, 'it is my father!'

The heavy steps came nearer; I sprang to my feet; I encircled her with my arm, for she was about to fall; and before I could draw another breath the door flew open, and he entered.

For a brief instant surprise seemed to usurp every other feeling in Prince Ivan's breast. Then the stern features flushed beneath the swarthy skin, and a terrible expression glared from his cruel eye. He was in full uniform, and (never stirring a foot from the threshold where he had paused upon opening the door) plucked a pistol from his belt. Without a word, without a pause, he pointed the weapon at my head.

There was an explosion, a piercing shriek, and—

And Katrina—Katrina, my beloved, my adored, had flung herself between us, and received the deadly charge!

I caught her as she fell, senseless and bleeding; I uttered wild words of hatred, of love, of despair, of cursing; I threw myself upon the ground beside her, and strove to stay the purple stream that gushed from her bosom. Alas, it was in vain! Before the smoke had cleared away, before Ivan himself well knew the deed he had committed, all was over, and the beautiful Katrina had passed away to that heaven for—which—"

The stranger's voice faltered;—and, letting down the window next to him, he leaned out for a few minutes in the evening-air. When he drew in his head again, I offered him my pocket-flask of brandy. He emptied it at a draught, returned it to me with a long-drawn sigh, threw away the end of his cigar, and resumed:

"You will forgive me, sir, if I hasten over this portion of my narrative. It is of a nature so agonising to my feelings, that I must content myself with merely stating a few leading facts, and passing on to subsequent events. Prince Ivan, struck with remorse and horror, solicited the emperor's leave to retire from the army, and entered a convent of monks near Moscow. I received an intimation from the government that I should do well to travel for the next eight or ten years. It was a polite form of exile, to which I was compelled to accede, greatly to the sorrow of my parents. For my own part, I was utterly heart-broken, and cared little what became of me. I went direct to Paris, and plunged into a course of the most reckless dissipation. Billiards, race-horses, dinner-parties, betting, and follies of every description, soon brought upon me the expostulations of my family. But I was careless of every thing—of health, fortune, reputation,—all. When my father refused any longer to supply my wilful extravagances, I incurred innumerable debts, and, giving no heed to the consequence, spent and drank and gambled still. At length, by some unaccountable chance, a rumour got about that my father had disinherited

me. From this moment I could find no more credit. The *éclat* by which my follies had been attended seemed to vanish away. My friends dropped off one by one; and, except by a few blacklegs, and two or three good-natured chums, I found myself deserted by every one. And still, such was my infatuation, instead of reforming—instead of meriting my father's aid and forgiveness—I only sank lower and lower, and continued to tread the downward path of vice.

An event, however, occurred which altogether changed the tendencies of my career. I had been dining with some wild fellows at the *Maison Dorée*. After dinner, when we were all very nearly intoxicated, we called as usual for cards and dice. I soon lost the contents of my purse; then I staked my cabriolet, and lost it; my favourite horse, and lost him; my watch, chain, and seals, and lost them. On this, somewhat startled, I paused.

'I'll play no more to-night,' I said doggedly.

'Pshaw!' cried my antagonist. 'Throw again; next time you'll be sure to win.'

But I shook my head, and rose from the table.

'I'm a beggar already,' said I, with a forced laugh.

De Lancy shrugged his shoulders. 'As you please,' he replied somewhat contemptuously. 'I only wanted you to have your revenge.'

I turned back irresolutely.

'Will you play for my house and furniture?' I asked.

'Willingly.'

So I sat down again, and in a few throws more found myself homeless. This time I was reckless. I poured out a bumper of wine, and tossed it off at a draught.

'If I had a wife,' I cried madly, 'I would stake her next; but I have nothing left now, gentlemen—nothing but wine and liberty, and myself. As this is no slave-country, you won't play, I suppose, for the latter?'

'Not I,' said De Lancy, sweeping his gains into his hat. 'I suppose you have no objection to make out that little affair of the house, cabriolet, &c. in writing, have you?'

There was an easy, satisfied, sarcastic triumph in his tone that irritated me more than the loss of all the rest. I made no reply; but, tearing a leaf from my pocket-book, wrote hastily, and half threw the paper at him.

'Take it, sir,' I said bitterly; 'and I wish you joy of your property.'

He surveyed the acknowledgment coolly, put it in his purse, and said with a sneering smile,

'Does it not seem a pity now that you should have absolutely nothing left whereby to retrieve these things? Another throw, another billet of a hundred francs, and perhaps they would all be yours again. By the way, you forgot your diamond-studs all this time. Will you try once more?'

And he threw the dice as he spoke. They turned up sixes.

'You might have thrown that, Petroffski,' he said, pointing to them.

I was sorely tempted; but I resisted.

'No, no,' I said, 'not my diamond-studs. They are an heir-loom; and—and I shall write to my father to-morrow.'

'Like a penitent good little boy,' said De Lancy, with an impatient gesture. 'Nonsense, man; throw for the studs. I feel convinced you'll win.'

'Say, rather, you feel convinced that *you'll* win, De Lancy. Have you not stripped me of enough already?'

'Insolent!' he cried. 'Do you think I value the paltry winnings?'

'I think you grasp all you can get.'

'Liar!'

The word had scarcely passed his lips, when I flung a glass of wine in his face. In another moment all was confusion. Blows were exchanged, the table was overturned, the lights extinguished. I received a severe wound upon the temple from falling against the open door, and fainted.

When I came to myself, I was stretched upon a sofa in

an adjoining room, with a surgeon bending over me. The morning-sun was streaming in at the windows. My companions were all gone, no one knew whither.

'What is the matter?' I asked faintly. 'Am I dying?'

The surgeon shook his head.

'You are severely hurt,' he said; 'but with care and quiet you will recover. Had I not better communicate with your friends?'

'Write to my father,' I murmured. 'You will find his—his address in my pocket-book.'

The surgeon took up pen and paper, and wrote immediately, partly from my dictation, and partly from his opinion of my condition. He then said that I must not be moved, and must, above all things, avoid excitement. As he uttered these words, and rose to take his leave, a sudden idea, or rather, a sudden presentiment, struck me.

I put up my hand to my bosom. *The diamond-studs were gone.*

After this I remember no more. The shock produced upon me that very effect which the surgeon had been so anxious to avoid. I lost consciousness again; and on being restored to life, passed into a state of delirious fever. For many weeks I lay upon the threshold of the grave; and when I at length recovered, it was to find my dear father and mother at my side. They had hastened over with succour and forgiveness, and to their tender cares I owed a second existence. As soon as my health was tolerably established, my father went back for a few weeks to Russia, disposed of his business, realised his fortune in money, and returned to France an independent man. The excellent man did not long survive this change. Within two years from the period of his establishment in Paris he died; and my mother survived him only a few months. They left me to the enjoyment of a princely fortune, which former experience has taught me to use worthily. I neither drink nor gamble. I pass my life chiefly in travelling. I am not married, and I do not think it likely that I ever shall be; for Katrina is ever present in my heart; and when I lost her, I lost the power of loving. Since that period fifteen years have elapsed. I have wandered through many lands: trodden the ruins of Thebes, and waked the echoes of Pompeii; shot the buffalo on the Western prairies, and pursued the wild-boar amid the forests of Westphalia. I am now on my way to Denmark; but purpose remaining a few days in Brussels, where probably I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again."

The stranger bowed as he said this, and I bowed in return.

"And now, sir," he continued, "from the night that I lost them in a scuffle at the *Maison Dorée* till this evening, when I behold them upon your shirt-front, I never saw those diamond studs again. I have sought for them, advertised them, offered rewards innumerable for them, during the space of fifteen years;—up to the present moment all was in vain. Not for their intrinsic worth,—for I could purchase plenty like them,—but for the associations connected with them, do I place so high a value upon those stones. They are the same which my grandfather concealed in his pillow of matting, which my father gave to me upon my birthday, which first drew upon me the eyes of my lost Katrina. Surely, sir, you will acknowledge that this is a pardonable weakness, and also that the studs are really mine?"

"Your tale, sir," said I, politely but firmly, "is indeed very surprising, and I may say very conclusive; but the case is so singular, the studs belong with so much apparent right to both of us, that I really think we must refer all decision on the point of ownership to the law. You cannot expect me to relinquish any thing so valuable without first ascertaining whether I really am compelled legally to do so."

"My dear sir," replied the stranger, "I had no idea of asking you to relinquish the studs. If you will do me the favour once more to show me that little bill (the amount of which I have forgotten), I shall be delighted to give you a cheque for the same sum."

But I had no wish to part from my studs.

"Excuse me, sir," I said somewhat uneasily, "but you have not yet proved to me that these stones are those of which you were robbed in the *Maison Dorée*. Make it evident to me that this is not a case of accidental resemblance, and—"

"Sir," interrupted the stranger, "when my father gave me the studs on my birthday, he caused my initials to be engraved in minute characters upon one of the facets at the back. To do this was a great expense. When done, it deteriorated perhaps from the market-value of the gems; but it made them infinitely more precious to me. If, sir, you will have the goodness to take them out of your shirt, I will show you the initials P. P. upon the under side."

By this time the train had reached the suburbs of Brussels, and in a few moments more we should arrive, I well knew, at the station.

"I think, sir," said I, "we had better defer this examination till to-morrow. We have almost gained our destination; and by the feeble light of this roof-lamp I—"

The stranger brought out a small silver-box filled with wax-matches.

"By the light of one of these convenient little articles, sir," he said, "I will engage that you shall see the letters. I am most anxious to convince you of the identity of the stones. Pray, oblige me by taking them out."

I could no longer find any pretence for refusal. The studs were attached each to each by a slender chain, and to examine one I was forced to take out all. As I was doing this the motion of the train slackened.

The stranger lit one of his matches, and I examined the stones in tremulous impatience.

"Upon my honour, sir," I said very earnestly, "I can perceive nothing upon them."

"Had you not better put on your glasses?" asked the stranger.

"*Bruxelles?*" shouted the guard. "*Changement de convoie pour Gand, Bruges, et Ostend!*"

Hang the glasses! they were so misty I could not see an inch before me.

"Allow me to hold the studs for you while you rub them up," said the stranger politely.

I thanked him, polished the glasses with my sleeve, held them up to the light, put them on.

"Now, sir," I said, "you may light another match, and give me the diamonds."

The stranger made no reply.

"I will not trouble you, sir, to hold them any longer," I said.

I turned; I uttered a shriek of dismay; I stumbled over my own portmanteau, which stood between me and the doorway.

"*Monsieur veut descendre?*" said the guard, with a grin.

"Where is the stranger?" I cried, leaping out and dancing frantically about the platform. "Where is the stranger? where is Peter Petroffski? where are my diamond-studs?"

"Has monsieur lost any thing?" asked the railway-interpreter, touching his cap.

"He had my studs in his hand! I turned my back for a moment, and he was off! Did any one see him?"

"Will monsieur have the goodness to describe the person of this thief?"

"He was tall, thin, very dark, with black eyes and an aquiline nose."

"And long hair hanging to his shoulders?" asked the interpreter.

"Yes, yes."

"And he wore a large cloak with a high fur-collar?"

"The same; the very same."

The porters and bystanders smiled, and glanced meaningfully at one another. The interpreter shrugged his shoulders.

"Every effort shall be made," he said, shaking his head; "but I regret to say that we have little prospect of success."

This man's name is Vaudon. He is an experienced swindler, and evades capture with surprising dexterity. It is not three weeks since he committed a similar robbery on this very line, and the police have been in pursuit of him ever since without effect."

"Then his name is not Peter Petroffski?"

"Certainly not, monsieur."

"And he is no Russian?"

"No more than I am."

"And—and his grandfather, who was a Hindoo—and the Empress Catherine—and the beautiful princess who was shot—and—and—"

"And monsieur may be convinced," said the interpreter with a smile, "that whatever story was related to him by Pierre Vaudon was from beginning to end—a fiction!"

Quite chopfallen, I groaned aloud, and took my melancholy way to the Hotel de Ville. There I stated my case, and was assured that no pains would be spared on the part of the police to apprehend the offender.

No pains were spared, nor money either; but all was in vain. From that day to this I never laid eyes upon my diamond-studs.

MARE'S-NESTS IN PARNASSUS.

THERE is a class of individuals who make the most wonderful discoveries, and contrive to make a stir about them, too, whose findings are all "open secrets," only surprising to others as seeming noticeable to the finders themselves. A "superfluous gentleman" of this kind (to quote a phrase from an old *Quarterly Review*) has lately told the world that a certain new poet is a plagiarist, because he has borrowed various images and bits of imagery from preceding poets. As if no poet had ever done the same before! Are not Milton, Shakspeare, Dante, Virgil, perhaps even Homer himself, full of imitations? And is not every great poet in a state of indebtedness to some previous ballad-monger, whose untaught strains have furnished many of the materials of his more elaborate epic, didactic, or dramatic work? How many old things have become new when touched by the magic finger of genius! Poetry as an art grows even in this way: the later bard stands on the shoulders of the elder, and sees farther. Wordsworth shows the influence of his reading in his better passages; there are in them a learned style, classic allusions, German philosophy, and certain technics, which in *The Farmer's Boy* are not traceable. Is, therefore, this poem more original than *The Prelude* or *The Excursion*? The great mind becomes greater by communion with other great minds, and the learned poet has the advantage of the simple minstrel.

If "these be truths," why should the "Life-Drama" of Alexander Smith be called over the coals by any "unnecessary Z" or other more serviceable letter of the alphabet, whose commonplace book teems with extracts from the bard of Rydal Mount, Campbell, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Leigh Hunt, Bailey, Spenser, Coleridge, and Lemprière? The poetic accountant would make commonplaces of Mr. Smith's choice figures; nay, the experienced arithmetician can count the repetitions on his digits, and tires of looking at his own finger-ends. If he had ever looked much farther, there would be no need to tell him now that his discoveries are all "mare's-nests."

These appropriations of Mr. Smith's, as appearing in the first poem of one who had at the time scarcely attained his majority, indicate nothing more than that plastic sensibility to beauty which, in such a case, is rather a credential to the embryo poet than a bar to his title. All young poets are prone to imitation. The all-important question is, Are the appropriators really poets? Is there, in spite of all their borrowings, a distinctive character in their productions? If they have this mint-stamp, all is well. We have read carefully all the parallel passages on which "Z's" charge of plagiarism is based; and in almost every instance we find

some addition or modification by Mr. Smith, amply sufficient to prove his poetic endowments. That the various beauties of many other writers could have been fused into harmony by one with no corresponding genius, is an assumption purely ridiculous. That a young writer should partially imitate and repeat such beauties, and combine them with his own, is at once feasible as a theory, and in this case, we believe, indisputable as a fact.

In some instances, Mr. Smith is accused of stealing from more than one poet the same image. For instance, the "mysterious voids, throbbing with star-like pulses," is traced both to Keats and Wordsworth. Then perhaps one of these poets borrowed from the other. Which? Either! Well, then, let Keats or Wordsworth suffer the charge as well as Mr. Smith, and all alike claim the privilege of the poetic fellowship—a community of goods. The disciples of Pope used a common language; and though more modern poets have enlarged the vocabulary that contented them, the diction of poetry is still peculiar. The garb of thought in verse is different from that which it wears in prose. It has its "singing robes" as well as its work-day clothes.

Having learned how to wear these, having acquired the sacred language, and mastery in its application, Mr. Smith is fully equipped for an independent course of action. He has qualified himself to add to the treasury of poetic expression; and more individual conception and execution will follow on these 'prentice doings of the muse's son.

In conclusion, may we not venture to suggest, that in the poem contributed by Mr. Alexander Smith to our own pages—"The Night before the Wedding"—there is a freshness of feeling, and an originality of phrase, which already shows maturity in the artist, and an ability to depend for the main body of his composition on his own resources? To whatever extent he may be able to do this hereafter, still at all times he will have the privilege,—and there is no reason why he should forego it,—to receive and appropriate glancing lights and illustrative reminiscences from preceding poets. Inspiration, however pure, is not clear of association, and will be qualified by the channel through which it issues. The mind has its memories as well as its imaginings; and both will blend in the result, and make it more beautiful from the union.



A HOME OF CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE;

OR, NOTES OF A RECENT VISIT TO COLNEY HATCH.

MELANCHOLY pleasures, although not popular with the multitude, may yet be profitably indulged in now and then by those who would realise the value of life.

"Half the world," it is said, "do not know how the other half live; neither do they care." I am disposed, however, to believe, that if they *did* know they would care. Many people appear callous, simply from the want of "opportunities" for reflection. In *all* human hearts there is an impressive place to be found—if it be sought for.

Let me, then, try for a few moments to interest the readers of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE in one especial class of unfortunates, who, from various painful circumstances, have lost the image of their Maker; and who, being deprived of the invaluable blessing of Reason, are placed under kind (but needful) restraint.

I have just returned from a visit to Colney Hatch, after having passed a most pleasant evening in the best of company,—*all* delighted to share with the inmates in their

annual Christmas festivities. It is of this I propose to speak.

I would observe, *en passant*, that the causes of insanity and mental aberration are as various as the phenomena of life itself; but some present themselves in special prominence. Drunkenness,—now, alas! alarmingly on the increase,—is of course the principal. The want of the actual necessities of life, and a deficiency of clothing, come next. Religious enthusiasm, over-study, undue excitement, the want of sleep, and hereditary taint,—these follow in the direful catalogue.

It is a subject for rejoicing, that all harsh modes of treatment are now discarded. I can remember the time when the lash was heard daily resounding through the walls of our lunatic asylums, followed by piercing shrieks and hideous howlings. These are silenced—let us hope for ever.

Insanity, at the time I speak of, was regarded as a crime, and treated accordingly. It is now viewed as a misfortune, and creates general sympathy, cruelty being superseded by mercy. With rare exceptions, and for very brief periods (when the patients are refractory), all is done, and well done, by gentle and soothing words. The patients *feel* this, and the influence at once subdues them. A powerful suggestion have we here, for universal adoption *beyond* the walls of places like these.

Let our readers now imagine us at Colney Hatch; the date, Wednesday, January 14; the hour, 6 p.m.; and the occasion, "The Grand Annual Christmas Entertainment and Fancy Ball."

The scene is laid in the Great Hall of Exercise, which, on all state occasions, is brilliantly lighted up, and fancifully decorated with flying flags, banners, evergreens, festoons, &c. &c.; three colossal twelfth-cakes (to be described presently) standing out in "high" relief, and completing the tableau of varied attractions.

The clock has chimed the hour of six. And hark! what are those sounds? They tell of a little army of anxious feet, all marching towards the doors of entrance. Here they come—in couples, triplets, and quartets. How pleased they look while taking their seats upon the numerous wooden (movable) benches that fill the hall—the males on one side, and the females on the other!

And what countenances! Oh, for the vivid pencil of a Hogarth to depict them faithfully! They present a deeply, painfully interesting study. The bystanders are affected; they sigh; and more than one tear is seen trembling in many an eye.

And now begin the evening's festivities in good earnest. First comes a charming series of Dissolving Views, accompanied by suitable airs. But how is this? Where is the band? Oh, it has missed the earlier train, and (for the moment) we must rest content with the piano. What matters? There is music enough in every heart to supply all deficiency.

A voice exultingly exclaims, "The band is come!" A moment more, and we hear as well as see it. A fresh gladness springs up. The instruments seem inspired, and all is mirth and jollity. How spirit-stirring to mark the effect now produced on those twelve hundred arms, legs, heads, and voices,—all roused into the most amusing state of grotesque activity!

From close observation, it is evident that the familiar airs and well-known strains, as they fall upon the ear, awaken in the minds of these poor creatures thoughts of happier days, when scenes like the present were little dreamt of.

But see, the Chromatrope is in full play, with its millions of artificial fireworks, exhibiting an endless variety of changes, forms, and colours. To suppress the laughter, cheers, and shouts of the spectators, might be attempted; but succeed it could not. All are in irrepressible ecstasies, and in the best of humour to make acquaintance with the next part of the performances, viz. the distribution of the twelfth-cakes. Previous to this, the room (hitherto darkened) undergoes a magical change. The Chinese lanterns with which the hall is bountifully decorated are quickly illuminated.

Lamps, too, out of number, pour out a flood of light. Harlequin's wand has been at work. We have an entirely new scene, and new effects,—a *tableau vivant* at once novel and picturesque.

The twelfth cakes are but three in number; but they are of a "sensible" size. The centre one (some six feet in diameter) weighs *only* 3 cwt.; the other two average $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. *each*! All were made and baked in the establishment, and were (of their kind) pictures of beauty, being very prettily as well as profusely decorated.

It was better than any play to view the upraised arm of the operator, when wielding the glittering blade that sliced away at those monster cakes. Nor was it a matter for less merriment while remarking how mysteriously and quickly the slices disappeared when cut. It was, with many of the sly old ladies, "cut—and come again."

But quick there! Clear away the benches! The time has come for the Ball. Dancing, waltzing, polking, pirouetting, flirting, &c. are now the order of the night. Oh, to look at those delighted performers in this little drama of life! Some evidently fancy themselves kings, queens, princesses, shepherds, and shepherdesses; others are harlequins, columbines, and coryphées. Away they fly! The hall resounds with sounds of joy and harmony. I was highly amused with some of the "ladies' head-dresses." How purely original and grotesque! It must have occupied hours of time, and weeks of ingenuity, to invent and complete *such* a toilet!

Among the assembled visitors—several hundreds—it gave me unfeigned pleasure to observe a goodly number of the gentle sex, who took great interest in the evening's amusements, sympathising freely with the inmates in their harmless amusements. It is woman's mission to be kind and gentle. She is an "angel of mercy," where her heart is enlisted.—But the scene has closed. The railway-whistle summons me home.

How much sorrow, mused I, whilst flying before the wind, exists in this world of ours, that might (with only a slight effort) be alleviated, if not altogether removed!

What a lesson, both as to the past (to be shunned), and the future (to be realised), is presented to us by Colney Hatch! We here view the irresistible power of kindness. This is the magician who has changed, as by a move of his arm, the old into the new lunatic asylum,—given a fitting *home* to the saddest of the sad, and who thinks it no trouble or condescension to amuse these poor creatures by such festivals as we have described. Who, after this, shall deny that little kindnesses *do* produce great results; and that many a passing cloud of darkness may be fringed with gold and lined with silver?

WILLIAM KIDD.

AN AQUARIAN IN TROUBLE.

To the Editors of the National Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,—I saw the aquarium first at the Regent's Park Gardens, then in a shop-window in the City Road, and then—every where. It is just the thing to arrest a wandering eye, and it arrested mine; and I at once determined to be the happy possessor of a tank. Alas, I knew not the penalties attendant on this worship of Neptune.

First of all, I bought a sixteen-inch bell-glass, fitted it with mould and rock-work, and stocked it with an abundance of British fishes. A slight frost came, and one morning, only a fortnight after my commencement, I was petrified at beholding the wreck of my toy; it was fractured into a dozen pieces, eight or nine gallons of water and a few quarts of fluid mud had saturated and spoilt the carpet, and all my pretty fishes were sprinkled about like dead sprats on the pavement at Billingsgate. I cooked two fine dace for breakfast, and gave the rest to the cat. Vile sacrifice!

Well, I began again, and avoided rock-work, thinking the *weight* too much for a *blown-vessel*. I made a mud bottom as before, fixed my *Vallisneria* into it, and about half-a-dozen other weeds, and then completed the stock with roach,

bleak, minnows, dace, chub, carp,—altogether thirty very fine fishes. In a week my fishes began to die, and I at once changed the water; still no better; every morning I found one or two silver-bellied pets "floating on their watery bier." Then the snails ate up my *Vallisneria*; the sides of the vessel got coated with filthy green scum; and as to the slopping of the room in frequent changing of the water, I dare not even reflect upon it for a moment without a shrug of horror. Chapped hands, broken jugs and pitchers, spoilt carpet, frightful waste of time, and the result—dead fishes, shabby plants, opaque glass, the bottom black and fetid, and the whole thing a bore.

Now what shall I do?—fling the vessel to old Harry, and bid adieu to the noble sport of aquatics, or *try again*? There must be some grand secret, known to the few adepts in these matters, else how are the tanks managed that are every where exhibited?

J. PAUL, Chertsey.

["*Try again!*" Decidedly; and when you do try, proceed as follows: Empty out the vessel, and clean the sides with fine sand, so as to remove the green growth from it. In laying down the bottom, use *pebbles only*, and of these not more than two inches. Take some tufts of *Anacharis* and *Starwort*, and tie a pebble to each tuft by means of a strip of bass, and pitch them in; add a few heads of *Water-Soldier*, and any other common weed you can get. Be content with a dozen fishes, and those mostly small. Use spring-water, and not a particle of sand or mould; and lastly, do not change the water at all; and you will be as much or more pleased than if you had never known a failure. Feed twice a-week with small red worms, or minced beef or mutton.

SHIRLEY HIBBERD.]

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Those who are now busy in completing their plantations of shrubs will do well to include this *Hypericum* in their list of new and pretty things. Sir W. Hooker says, "It will soon find its way into every garden and every shrubbery."

SHIRLEY HIBBERD.



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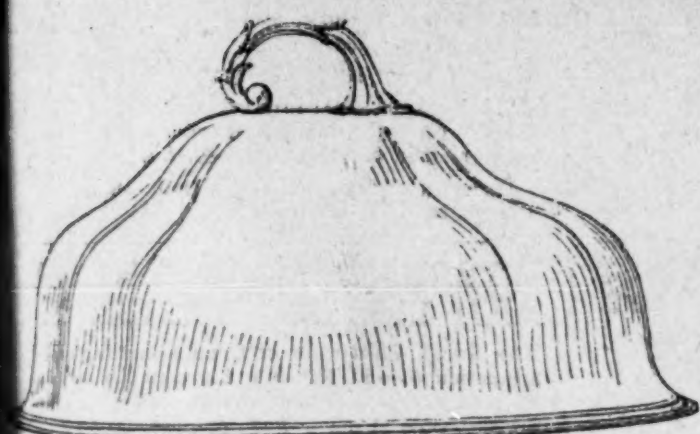
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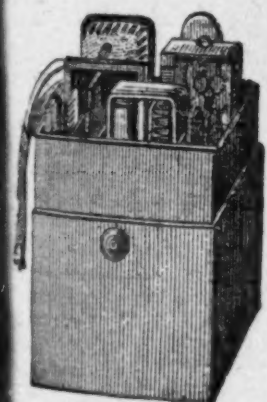
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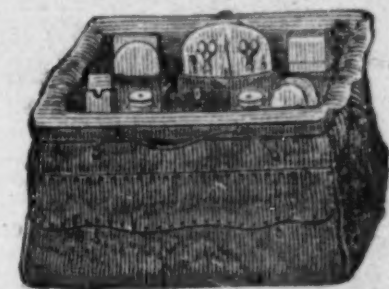
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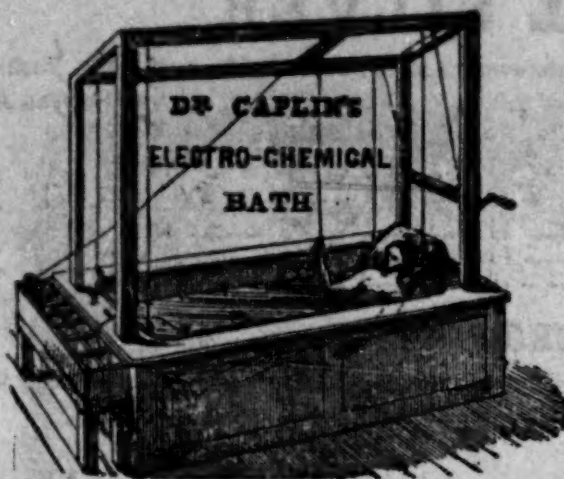
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